

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN TO HER FRIEND MISS MUSGROVE



GRACE DONWORTH

104

Leadoff - Sunday

1932 - June 6

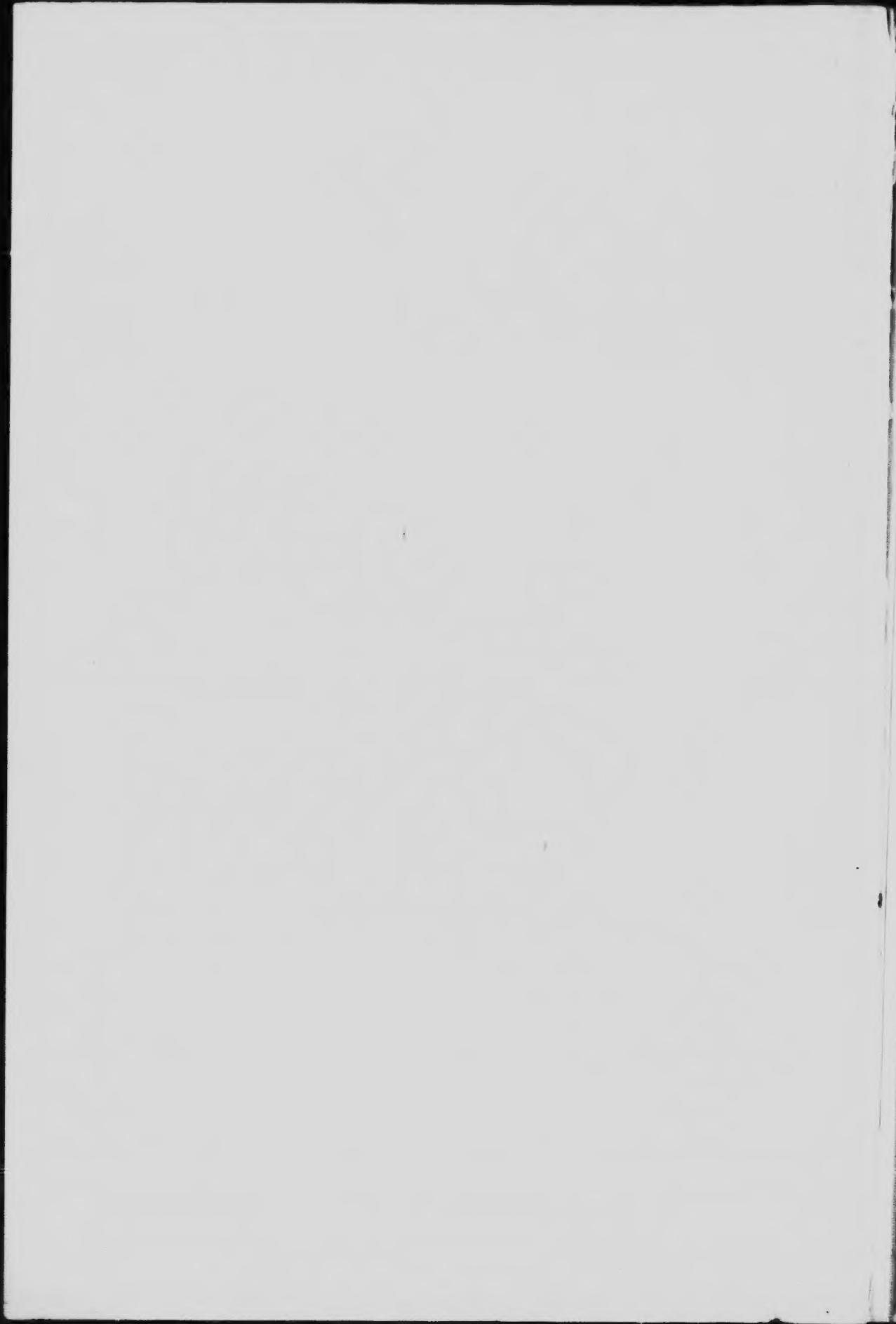
2500

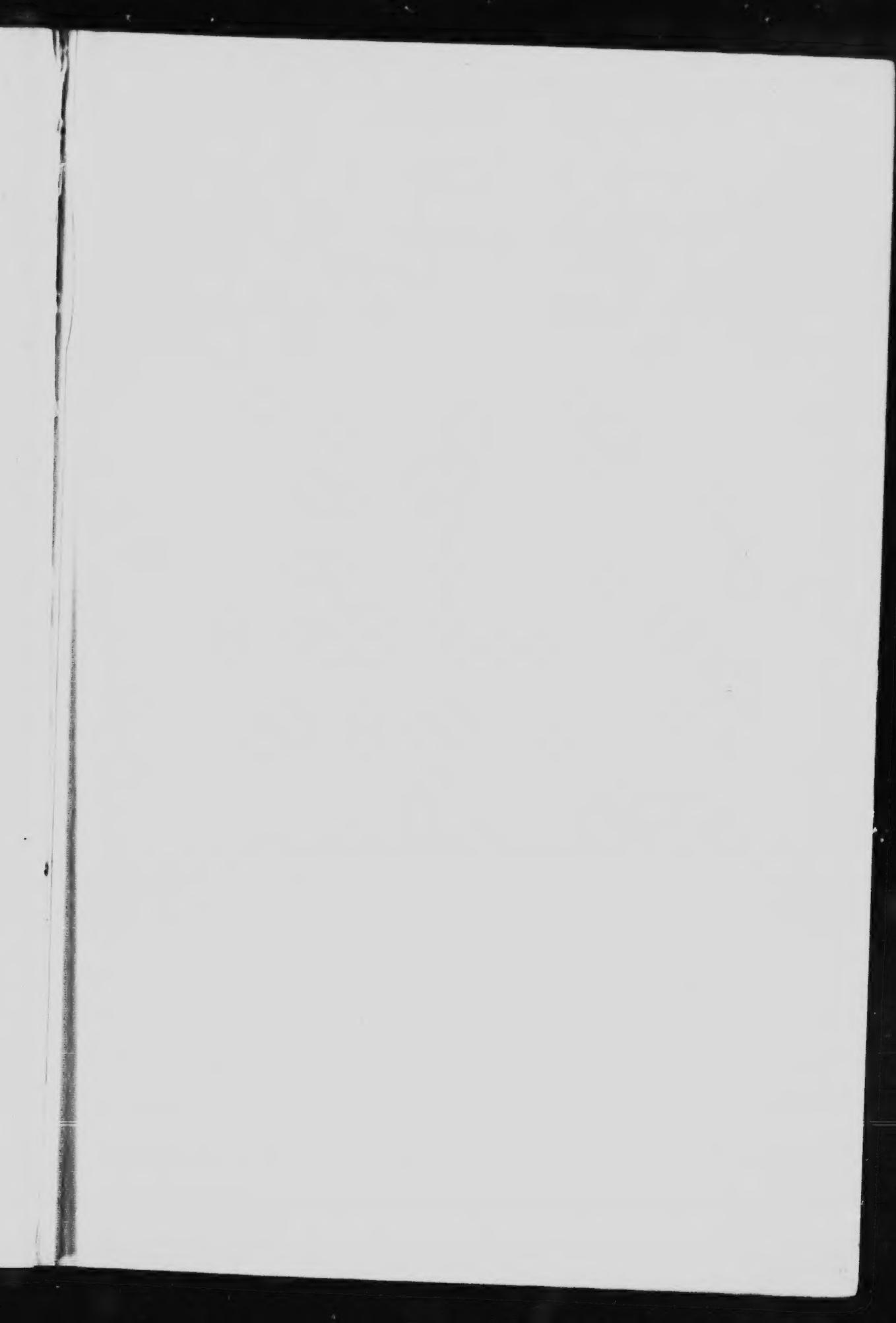
Lat? Can 6d

Verso "Reprinted..."

Jan 1932

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN
TO
HER FRIEND MISS MUSGROVE







*I says "That will be as Jim and Mame say," only adding that
our meals was plain and unpretentious as a rule*

See page 289

THE
LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN
TO
HER FRIEND MISS MUSGROVE
BY
GRACE DONWORTH

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FREDERIC R. GRUGER



TORONTO
MCLEOD & ALLEN
PUBLISHERS

PS3507

069

L48

1908

* * *

COPYRIGHT, 1908

**BY SMALL, MAYNARD AND COMPANY
(INCORPORATED)**

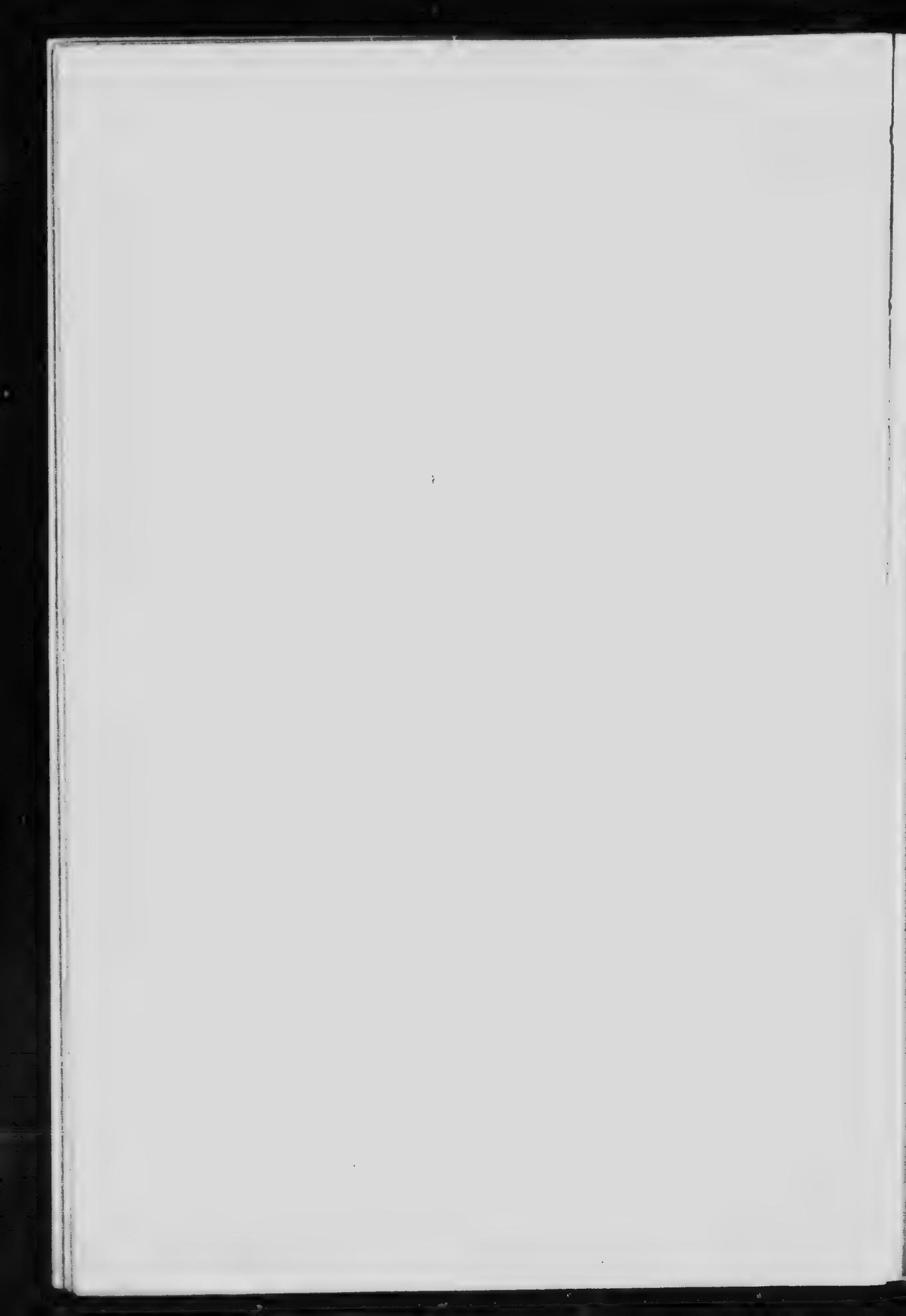
Entered at Stationers' Hall

First edition, October, 1908

Reprinted, November and December,
1908, and January, 1909

PRESSWORK BY
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

TO MY BROTHER
GEORGE DONWORTH



ILLUSTRATIONS

	<small>PAGE</small>
I says "That will be as Jim and Mame say," only adding that our meals was plain and unpretentious as a rule (<i>See page 289</i>)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
I talked with you quite a spell about the sufferers and said wan't it awful about that earthquake	2
I'm learning him the colledge yell. He says it after his pr yers every night	12
I asked Mandy afterwards how she knew so well how she acted when she didn't know	18
When I asked her she looked awful sorrerful and says, I ain't got no disease, Jen ; I've had trouble with my feller	24
"Simply is the right word," says Mame	36
Well, Sis opened the door and who in all creation should stand there but our minnistar, Mr. Oglevie	40
She follerred me down stairs with an azalium plant in her arms that Dinny had give her on her berthday	46
"Jen, a man sozzling along without wife is like sow- ing without no under thread. It might jest as well not be done at all"	70
"Hannah Allen!" says Mrs. Ingraham in a joyous tone ; "what on earth have you done to them pants! I can't see whare the patches leave off and the pants begin!"	82

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
By this time Sis had tried onto the boddly her new doll's head and much to every one's joy it fitted. A pink necktie fastened it on secure and there she was compleat	96
"I thought you didn't look at him," I says. "Oh! do you suppose a girl has to look at a man to see him?" says Ellen	172
Nex morning he asked if he could be of any serviss and Mandy set him to cleaning the lamps . . .	180
"The South America lady"	202
We liked to died larfing one night when he wound them up for us	208
"It's easy enough to get into them," he says, "but it's impossible to get out of 'em again"	270

THE
LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN
TO HER FRIEND
MISS MUSGROVE



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I

Providence, April the 25th 1906.

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I took some close into the armerry and give them to you to send to the sufferers out to Californy and I hate to trouble but I got to have one of them back. It was a black all-wool shevyott with a jacket to match trimmed kind of fancy number 38 burst mesure and passymenterry across the front and the collar.

I wouldn't trouble you but it belonged to my brother's wife and she is mad about it. I thought she was willing but she wan't. She says she wan't done with it and she was going to wear it a spell longer. She aint so free-hearted as what I am and she has

I

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

got more to do with than I have having a husband to work and slave for her.

I guess you remember me. I am short and stout and light complected. I talked with you quite a spell about the sufferers and said wan't it awful about that earthquake. I shouldn't wonder if they had another one right off seeing the general condition of the country is kind of explosive. I hate to take that black dress away from the sufferers but I will hunt round and see if I can get another one. I will call to the armerry for the other one if you will jest lay it aside so no more at pressant from your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

No 21 Scott Court
Providence R. I.

I liked your appearence very much.



F.R.GRUBER

I talked with you quite a spell about the sufferers and said wan't
it awful about that earthquake



II

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I got your letter all right. Now don't you worry any more about the black suit. When I told Mame what you said she felt reel bad about you fretting over it and she says, good Lord, she must think I'm 'ner than dirt.

I give her one of them feathar boars sech as is all the go and she was tickied to death over it and it kind of made it up to her about losing the suit. She is reel amable by nature but she has been awful tried this spring what with one thing and another and she aint herself. Jim says to me one day Go slow with Mame for a spell, she is awful tried what with the young ones and the spring cleaning, and a fire broke out in our bacement that threttened to lose our

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

little all the same week as the California
earthquake.

Everybody has their troubles and take it
right straight through our crosses aint no
heavier than we can bare. They's a higher
power that watches over us and protecks us
from injerry.

I hope you have got along fine with your
good work. No more at presant from your
true freind,

Jennie Allen.

III

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I had ought to answer your letter before but I didn't get time. I would like to go down to Maine first rate but I am needed to home the werst way.

I've got a sister that aint very bright. She used to have fits but she is easing up on them now, averaging only one every little while. She can work all right and she does the heft of the heavy work but she aint got any head to plan. She lacks judg-
ment. Jest to show you, I give her some money Crismuss seeing she was out of so many things she needed and what did she do but go and have her picture taken. If you could see her you would know it was the worst thing she could do. She needs a giding hand. Her and Mame is apt to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

have a few scraps in the coarse of a day and I have to be here to kind of straighten things out.

Then another thing my brother Jim is naturally temperet but sometimes he gets led away and comes home feeling pretty good, then I have to help him up the back way and carm him down. Mame is too up and coming with him and it riles him.

And if I want needed I dont beleive I could leave Jamesy. He is the one next to the baby and he is awful cute and cunning in his ways, and loving as can be. He sleeps with me nights. I brought him up by hand and I think the world of him and so does he me.

You see how it is especielly about poor Mandy. Almost Mother's last words was, Don't put Mandy into an institution and Jim says, Mother, don't you worry. Me and Jennie will look out for Mandy.

I am much obliged to you for the chanst and I wish I could go. It is cool and re-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

freshing in Maine. We used to live there once—down to Chictooiset. I wish you well.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

I know a girl that would go most likely. Her name is Ellen Hennersey. I guess she will go up to see you if you want her to. She is Irish but very plessant.

IV

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

Your letter is at hand and contents noted. The youngones has tore it all up for money so I have forgot how many aperns you have got to make but send them down and I guess I can make all there is.

It don't make much ords what I work on without it's rappars. Rappars is my favorite ockipation, seeing they are more interesting than aperns, unless the aperns is trimmed with tucks and aiging and then they seem foolish. What they calkilate to do is jest to pertect your close and it aint sense to fix them so they need pertecting themselves. But with rappars it's differant and when I'm making them for Clay and Palmer I always make beleive I know what kind of a woman is going to wear them.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I made a beauty last week and I named the lady that was going to wear it Mrs. Saint Clare. I imagined she was tall and slim and I made it kind of small for a 36.

I never slight the button holes, though they don't pay no more for good button holes than they do for mizzable ones that ravvle out at the slightest provocation. I don't make so much money because it takes time to make them good but I wouldn't be seen slyng in sech ones as is usuelly found on botten rappars.

Then I sew on the buttons extry strong, though I know nobody will ever know who it was that took sech pains with them; but I know more than one will say, These is awful good butten holes for a botten rappar, and I see I aint got to fortyfy these buttons and life aint any too full of pleasant little surprises like that.

Mame says it carms and soothes her jest to hem dish-cloths, 25 cents a groce for Tanney & Wilber, but I like something that

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

requiers talent and gives better pay. I lay by so much every week for Jamesy's edduca-
tion. He is going to Brown if my health
is spared. I got 68\$ now and he aint but
three years old. He is going to take all
the hire branches. Jim says what's the use
of him studying Latin, he wont never go
there; but I tell him maybe he will travel
in all the forrin parts there is. Jamesy
knows he is going to Brown when he is
grown up and he loves the little brown ban-
ners I've made for his hosecart and otto.

Once I had him with me when I was
crossing the campers with some work and
he had a picture book under his arm what
the lady had give him, and if that dear lit-
tle feller didn't march up the steps of one
of the big buildings as if he belonged there.
'A young man was right behind him and he
larfed and says, come along in, sonny.
So he acchelly went in and staid a spell.
It give me an awful start because it was
jest the sight I had thought about so much

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

when I set sewing and planning for Jamesy. I expeck I'm foolish but it made me cry for joy. I aint any doubt it was a sign give to me that things was coming out for Jamesy like I planned. I'm learning him the college yell. He says it after his prayers every night.

You ask me if I work evenings. I do without there's something extra going on. Last night I couldn't compose myself to sew on account of some music we had. Jim fetched home a feller from the shop that played on the fiddle. He done the best he could and we all listened respectful to the poor feller, but he didn't keep no kind of time. He give jest the same amount of time to one of them teeny little black-headed notes as he did to a big round whole one. Mr. Spinney was in here and he said the fiddler man was nothing more than a musical soshelist because a reel soshelist spoils the melody of life by giving to a whole note like Roosevelt or Taft the same

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

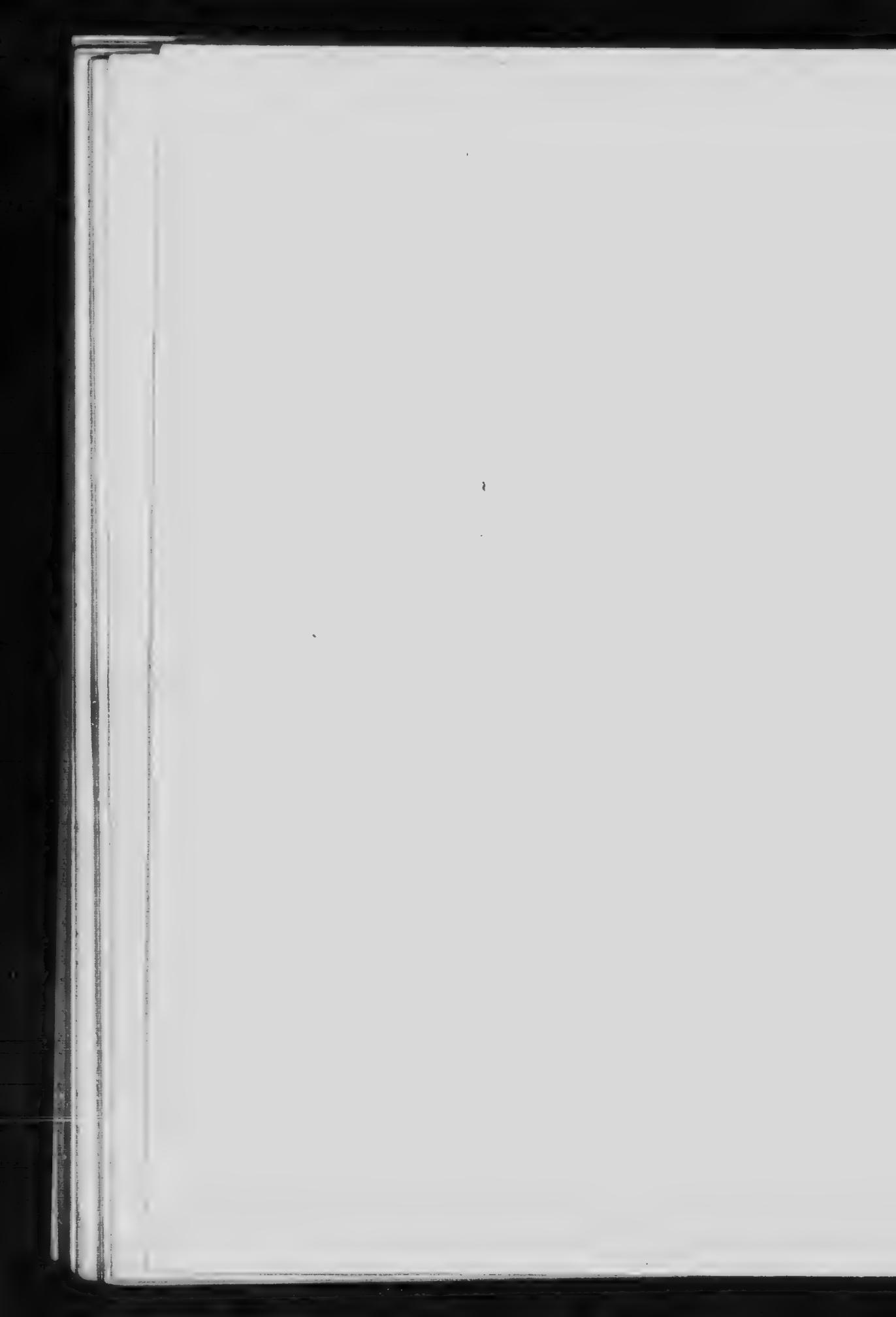
value as they do to a little 16th black ditch digger and no more.

Mr. Spinney is the one that has the front room two floors up and is awful entertaining. He is a Maine man but a perfeck gentleman. So is his mother. She is there yet and is an invalid of the werst kind. She aint able to set up and he has to spend all his prophets squaring up for operations and treatments, but he don't never complain and worships the ground she walks on. She has had to forego 4 operations besides other expenses. He says she has managed to hold on to her appendicks so far but they may go any time. He says he wont never feel settled till they are desposed of. He dar-sent launch out very big and break into what he calls Mother's appendicks fund. When the boys want him to go in a little strong he says, Durn it, what's the fift commandment for any way, if it aint to be kep?

A man nex door has jest fell down the seller stairs and they have sent for me. He



I'm learning him the colledge yell. He says it after his prayers
every night



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

has broke his fashel bone. Mr. Spinney says you can't rise with the lark if you've been on one the night before. Hoping this will be satisfacterry,

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

V

Providence, August 21th

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

Jamesy is dead.

He died at 20 minutes to four this morning of collery infantum superinduced by a low state of the blood and intence heat.

I can't write any more now. I will see that you get the aperns. Jennie Allen.

he was jest the same as my own child.

VI

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I was awful glad to get your letter it was so heartfull and consoling. All the people that knows us has ben awful kind to us in our dispensation of Providence. The neighbors and freinds come in with flowers and set peaces. One of them was a lier surrounded with mertle and smelt lovely. Mame took it the hardest of all and had to be carmed down with morfeen in frequent intervals. It is funny the differant ways greaf and sorrer affecks differant people.

Jim looked like death and jest hung round and didn't know what to do with himself. He says to me afterwards, Jen, I never wanted a drink so bad in my life.

I didn't let on but I knew what he was

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

up against because I know when he is blue and discurridged the appetite comes on the feircest. So I hunted up all the ord jorbs I could think of for him to do and tried to cheer him up and hid all the small change. He had got leave of absence from the shop which they hadn't ought to do because work is the panacear in all afflictions.

At last he says kind of careless, Got any small change?

And I says, Yes, Jim, but I got to use it.

Then I see him kind of slinking out of the back door, and I tried to think of one more jorb to keep him busy, but everything round the house was in apple pie order and he knew it. Mame was asleep and the youngones was in the neighbors. Everything was frightful it was so quiet. I run into the setting-room and I says to Mandy Mandy, I don't see but you have got to make beleive have a fit. We have got to keep Jim in the house some way.

She was on in a minute and I hollered

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

to Jim come back quick, you're needed. He come russian back and done all he could for Mandy who was on the floor threshing round at a great rate. That saved the day. I asked Mandy afterwards how she knew so well how she acted when she didn't know and she said Sis had went through them capers lots of times jest to give her an idea of what she had passed through.

Sis is the oldest child and she is named Jennie for me but we all call her Sis to tell her from me. She is a nice child old-fashioned and quiet as can be, and she makes us think of Mother quite a lot. The way she squizzles up her eyes when she smiles calls Mother to mind very foarcible. She never has to be punished or chastised and don't want any better fun than to set and sew on dish-cloths or tidies. She has always appeared to be her father's favoryte; so when I see him setting by Jamesy's bed with his head in his hands I told her to go in and comfort Father. I didn't take

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

notice she was sucking the candy lamb Mrs. Hennery had give her. She was calki-lating to keep it for a keepsake but the other young ones had got afowl of it and had dirtyed it all up, playing with it on the floor and round the stove so she had to suck it off clean, every little while. She had to let them have it or they would bawl and make a noys. Well, she clim up in her father's lap and soon as that candy lamb touched his clean shirt boosom that he was bound to put on though it would'nt be due in the natural course of events for two days more (he put it on out of respeck to Jamesy) he give her a push to get out of the way. He never done sech a thing in all his life before but it takes all kinds to make a world.

I wish you could see that poor child. She didn't holler or say a word. She jest crep away in a corner and shook and sobbed to herself. Then he clapped the climacks by telling her to chase out.



*I asked Mandy afterwards how she knew so well how she acted
when she didn't know*



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I don't think he would of done it if one
of the women that come in hadn't ben try-
ing to console him and said, Now suppos-
ing it was Sis. You can see it was about
the worst thing she could give utterance
to. She had no tack. From your true
freind,

Jennie Allen.

Sometimes it seems as if I couldn't stand
it; but I try to manage to do my crying
nights.

Last night I took his little flannin night-
gown and put the sleeves round my neck
and made believe I could hear him say,
Dood night, aunt Nennie.

I expeck I done wrong to make sech an
idol of him and I was punished by him
being took away where there aint no sin nor
sorrer.

VII

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I am much obliged for the picture. It is reell pretty and I love to look at the dear little innocent feller holding his own among them crafty-looking old codgers. When Jim see the name of the picture, Christ among the docters, he said he guessed it was the last time he was among 'em. He said he didn't see no signs nowdays of his influance among them. He feels awful hard against docters since Jamesy was called to Heaven. He says it wouldn't of ber. that way if he had been doctered differant.

Then we've had Mandy diagnosticated by 2 physicians and Dr. Mary Shute and the whole three disagrees with all the rest. Dr. Mary says Mandy most likely will out-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

live us all and Mr. Spinney says it is a case of the survival of the fittest.

He alwers has to have his little joke and it don't do no harm as I know of. He was here once when Mandy was seazed with a spell and he left. When Jim told him he'd ought to have staid, he says, I always come away when I see fit.

Jim took that all right but got mad another time. Jim was saying that if Roosevelt hadn't done nothing else for us he'd contributed two immortal sayings to our language the strenuous life being one and a houseful of happy children the other.

Put em together, says Mr. Spinney, for it's all one saying.

He was twitting on facks because we do average quite a number and me and Jim has quite of a tussle getting close and vittles for all; but no one aint heard us complain so fur. Mr. Spinney is 2 floors up and when the young ones is carrying on very partickler he comes in and says, Play-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ing tennis, kids, ain't yer? I thought I
heard the racket.

He has got lots of nerve but you have
got to have all the nerve there is to carry
you through this world or any other world
I've ever heard tell of, especially in the
insurance business so no more at present
from

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

VIII

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I'm terrible worried about Ellen Hennery and I make bold to call to mind what you said about doing me any little faver. If you know of anybody that wants to hire an awful nice pretty girl as good as gold to go off in the country and work, she is the one. But I aint sure she will leave the city and give up all hopes of him. Don't you remember I recommended her to go down to Maine to work for you?

We all set great store by Ellen. Her and her mother lives up stairs and she is as pretty as a picture till this spell come over her. She has ben pindling away and looked so picked we thought she must have some disease nawring at her vitals. But when I asked her she looked awful sorrer-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ful and says, I ain't got no disease, Jen; I've had trouble with my feller.

Well, she up and told me the whole story. I knew her and Dinny Caffrety had ben keeping company quite a long spell, and I took notice he had stopped hanging round; but seeing I never took any fancy to him it didn't worry me none. But it did Ellen, it seems. She says, O Jen, I don't want to live if I can't get Dinny back. And me all the time thinking she had turned him down.

She says a blonde demmingstraighter down to Clapp & Palmer's has got him in her foils and he aint got no eyes for anybody else; and mind you Ellen the sweetest and prettiest gin' you ever saw. I aint got anything against demmingstraights in general. I know one that is a member of the Babtist church and fears both God and man; but this one is a differant kind. She makes up to every young man she sees and fassinates them. I told Ellen it wan't



When I asked her she looked awful sorrowful and says, I ain't got
no disease, Jen; I've had trouble with my seller

+ favoree

15-3



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

nothing but infatuation and she could plan to meet Dinny by accident and have a nice little talk and invitgh him to come in that evening. But she is too proud-sperrited and wont do nothing of the kind. Then I recommended her to take up with some other young man because I know jealousy is a powerful weapon. But no. She says she would ruther die than take up with another feller after she has ben engaged to Dinny. Why she says, I couldn't ever keep company with anybody else even if I never saw Dinny again. So I concluded argueing done no good and the best thing would be change of scenery and vittles.

That was why I was so feirce to have her go down to Maine. Like as not she would see some likely young feller that would make her forget all about that Dinny that I aint got any very great opinion of. He aint bright and lively like Mr. Spinney, and I ben hoping he and Ellen would strike up a match. I plan to have them meet here

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

evenings and I can see he is terrible taken with her looks. He likes pretty girls as well as the nex one, and she is uncommon handsome with big blue eyes that has got thick black curly lashes round them. I never saw anything so pretty as Ellen's eyes—not stars nor flowers nor the sky, nor nothing I ever come acrost is half so pretty. Then her mouth and teeth is jest lovely and her cheeks was pink only till now when she is pindling down. So good gracious, what on earth that Dinny Caffrety can see in that demmingstraighter after being so much in Ellen's company is more than flesh and blood can sense. Then she is sech a little lady in her ways and is so soft-spoken. Mr. Spinney says there is in her voice the reverberations of far-off drawing-rooms. I alwers remember what he says even when I don't exackly sense what he means. Any way you can see he likes her and I shouldn't wonder if my wishes about

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

them come true. He has got propiniquity in his faver that they tell so much about.

So if you know of anybody that needs help of any kind that is honest, send me word and I will let you down easy on the price of my work to pay for it. It greeves us all to see the poor little girl meaching away to nothing. Jamesy used to make her laugh when nothing else could. Now he's gone she is worse than ever. She set the greatest store by Jamesy and when it was all over I gave her his red shoes for a keepsake. We couldn't have give them to anybody else. Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

P. S. We ben awfull worried about Ponto because he run away this morning but Bub jest stuck his head in the door and says Ponto is back. I found him at the cobblers with a smiling face and 2 buttens off.

IX

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I am glad the work suited you. You needent pay me till I finish the whole jorb. It won't be much any way. I am alwers mcderate with freinds.

Last Thursday was Mandy's birthday and Jim said he was going to take her to Keith's instead of giving her a treat same as he alwers does. I guess he will regret it to his dying day.

Mandy is apt to be taken notice of in the street so we fixed her all up in black so to make her look quiet and unobtrusive. They set pretty far back and Jim done all he could to make it a go. He had bought her some peppermints to kind of interest her between the acks and hoped all would be serene.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

What did she do the first thing but pass the peppermints to the woman that set nex to her. The woman shook her head and turned her face away; but Mandy says, "Yes, take some. I got a plenty. It's my birthday and I've got as many peppermints as I am old."

Then the woman took one and Jim thinks it reminded her of something sad in her past life, because she hid her face in her hands and shook as if she was crying, and so did the woman with her. Mandy thought the ushers little boys hunting round for a seat, and because they was polite enough to wait for older people to pass in, there wasn't none left for them. So she made room for 2 or 3 to set beside her and told them to set there. "Come along, sonny," she said to one of them. "They is room aplenty along of me."

He almost died alaughing.

There was a balled-headed man set in front of them and bymeby a mosquito come

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

and lit on his head. It was quite conspicuous on account of his head being bare, and when Mandy seen it she wanted to slap her hand hard on his head and kill it. But her hands was sticky from the peppermints so she jest blowed on it with all her might and main. Jim said she almost blowed the man's head off.

My! if the man want mad! He riz right up and faced Jim. Jim tried to explain and says, "What my sister done she done with the freindlyest feelings." But it wan't no use, and in a few breaf well-chosen words he told Jim what he thought of him. Then he changed his seat to get away from them and Mandy thought he was pleased because she'd made way with the mosquito and that he'd give up his seat in front of her so to give her a better view of the stage. So she follererd him right over and thanked him which made the man madder than before, especially as considerable many people laughed. Jim says the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

whole eppisode was painful in the extreme.

Well, Mandy cut up ridicklous all through. She rubbered and passed remarks about the people out loud. Jim thought he would go right down through the floor and welcome. At last one of the actors on the stage asked a conundrum that she knew the answer to and she riz right up and blarted out the answer before everybody. All the congregation laughed and Jim says, "Come, Mandy, I guess we've got our money's worth;" and he led the way out, him and Mandy the sinecure of all eyes.

He didn't say nothing after they got ou:—he was too mad. And all the way home she talked about the beautiful ladies and their close, and the funny business, not realizing hers was the funniest of all. Well, Jim's anger cooled after a spell and he hadn't the heart to tell her how things was. He says there's no need of it because she wont never go again. He wishes he had

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

bought her a quart of strawberry ice cream and let it go at that, or let her go at that, as you might say. Strawberry is her favorite beverage.

Mr. Spinney come in in the evening and I thought he would die a'laughing to hear Mandy tell about what a good time she had and about her guessing the conundrum. It was all in the papers nex day, but no names was mentioned. Lots of people thought Mandy was hired by the management to amuse the congregation.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

Ps. It want me said what you thoght I said in my othar letter. It was me saying that Bub said it. I told about it to Mame and she says I better put in coatashun marks same as they do in books. She says you enclose around what someboddy else says and they shift off the responsibility where it belongs. I didnt

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

know their mission was jest that before and I was tickled to death to find out about them. I am agoing to fix up my letters with them after this. Of course I had al-wers took notice they were sprinkled over reading pretty often and they made a page kind of spotted up and cheerfull looking but I didnt sence they was so important as what they reely are.

I wisht there was some sech thing when you are talking as well as writing especally when its the names of books ect. It would pervent misunderstandings a good many times. Mame was terrible mortifide one day when some one asked Jim if he had read called back by Hue Conway and he says "No, who wrote it?" "Called back" pastured off like this would of made it as plain as your daylights. And it would be a good idea to have some way for a minister to part off what he says out of the Bible from what he says out of his head.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Sometimes Sundays in the sermon we dont know where the profit Ezekell leaves off and Mr. Oglevie begins.

Speaking of sech things as punctuation calls to mind what Sis said once to her teacher when she asked her what peice she was agoing to speak on Friday. "Hyphen to the ocean by Lord Biron," says Sis. What she meant was 'to the ocean but the question come so kind of sudden she ancered before she thought. When the teacher corrected her she cryed, I mean Sis cryed.

X

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I calkilated to get your work all done to-day but something ockurred last night that kep me from working for a cupple of hours. I might as well tell you about it, then you will understand.

Just before supper, about half past 5, there was considdable of a rumpus going on in the setting-room. Sis was saying over to me her piece that she is going to speak in school Friday. It is an awful pretty peice and I am going to have it for my favrite pome. Sis has wrote it off for me but I know it by heart so I am going to write it to you in this letter. I want you to tell me if it aint a handsome peice. It seems as if it was kind of wrote for me.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

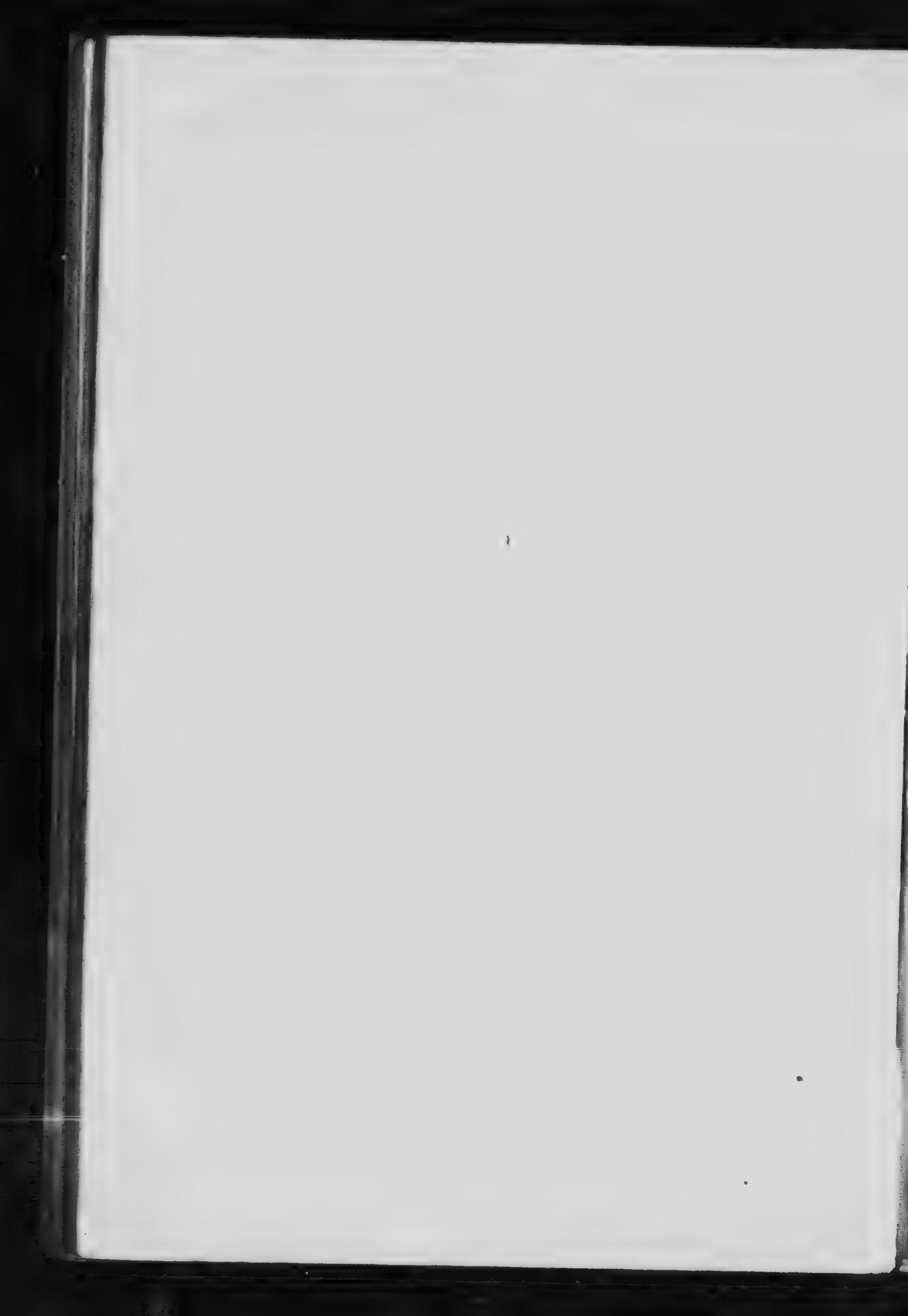
"Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me
astray,
This is my work, my blessing, not
my doom;
Of all I live, I am the only one
by whom
This work can best be done, in the
right way."

The part that says "When vagrant wishes beckon me a Stray," makes me think of you when you wanted me to go down into Maine to work for you. Only it aint reely polight to call a lady "vagrant wishes." It sounds kind of like a tramp. But it has done me a lot of good. Sis puts in all the proppar jesters and when she comes to that part I make her point towards Maine and it works in a little gography at the same time. You can see what a nice writer she is. She writes the vertigo hand which is nice and plain but not fancy.

Well, I was sewing and she was setting



"Simply is the right word," says Mame



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

alongside of me reciting and gouging out apples for sarce. You know the apples is dretful poor this fall and it is quite of a jorb to gouge them out and Jim says when he seen some of the worms which was quite sizable, he shouldent wonder if the serpent in Eaden took the interrest he did in the apple because it was his former home. Any way these little critters was his worthy descendants, still ockipying apples and making trouble for the human race. But he often remarks the Eaden apple must have been made into hard cider before it could prodooce the effecks claimed for it.

Well, I was going to say the young ones was playing injun and was yelling and rampaging round so that Sis had to holler her peice awful loud or else I couldent hear her. She had gone nice and pleasant to the Boys and asked them if they didnt want to be good and peacible injuns same as they have in Maine that jest makes pretty baskets and digs sprews gum offen the trees

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

but they says, "No, we dont." So then she begun to holler the peace in my ear. She said it was all right because there was a peace in the reading book about Demos-sytheans hollering his peaces in the noise of the waves of the sea shore to strenthen his voice. Probably he wan't a fambly man or he needent have went to the sea shore for any sech purpose.

Mame and Mandy was getting supper ready in the Kitchen and about this time there was quite of a misundarstanding going on about Mandy putting 2 eggs in the Flap-jacks when the rule dident call for only 1. Mandy is nachelly heavy-handed and often has to be called down for jest sech violations, especially when eggs has riz to sublime heighths a dozen on account of so many hens being off duty. But sometimes Mandy sticks too close to the rule and one morning when she was cooking some tappy ochre pudding, and for all there was a sight of work to be done, she squunched right

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

down in a chair by the stove and dident move a mussel till Mame called out, "Are you taking your night's rest in advants?" then she says "No, I am simply follerig the directions of the book, "Do not stir while it is boiling." "Simply is the right word," says Mame.

Bub, the one Mr. Spinney calls hub-Bub, was a injun cheef and had on a blankit and a fether dustar on his ed and a nuther tribe was fighting against his when thare came a knock to the dore. The one that knocked told us in the coarse of the evening that it was the last of a serys and he had Put con-sidderable mane strenth into it. Well, Sis opened the door and who in all creation should stand there but our minnistar, Mr. Oglevie. Sis said walk rite in like a little lady and take a sete not notissing that there want no seat for him, the chares all being turned up for wig warms. But he bot-temed one up for himself and set down. He is kind of a sollem looking man thogh

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

he dont mean no harm in the world By it, and out clared the yung ones quicker than a wink to the kitchen. He inquiered if we was having a childrens party. You see they kited round so quick and lively they ap-peared more numerus than they ackchelly was which was unnecessary, gracious knows, for ordinerry perpusses.

I says "No, its only Our little ones but thay are quite playfull at times." "So I see," he says; "children blessem and briten the home." "How menny hav you got to yore house?" says Sis. "Not any," he says, and Sis looked kind of puzzled like she does when she gets stuck in a rithmatick ex-ample. Then he ses kind of quick, "What you doing, little girl?" "Gougin out apples," she says, putting the refuge dish which had begun to look kind of Lively undar a chair but going on with her work. I knew Mame and Mandy knew he was here because I see Mandy's eye at the crack of the door, but I wanted to give them Time



*Well, Sis opened the door and who in all creation should stand there
but our ministar, Mr. Oglevie*



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

to fix themselves up so I says, "Sis, don't you want to speak your new peace for the ministar?" So she laid down her knife and clapsed her hands and said it clear through without stopping once. Then she spoke "Lead kindly light" that she had picked out of Mother's old hymn book and lernt herself. She aint a pritty child, being puny and narrer favored like Mother, but she looked so carm and sweet and she spoke so correck that I see the teres standing in his eyes. "She seams to sence the meaning of it," he says. "Yes," I says, "She sences most everything there is. She is a reel old fashened and dependable child and she is the only one in the bunch that can be trusted to seed raisons." Then he talked reel nice to her and told her she Must always do what is right for there is one that sees every-thing we do and watches all our commings in and all Our goings out and nothin is hid from. "Do you know who that is, little girl?"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Yes, its Mrs. Ezry Sawyer," says Sis.

Mrs. Ezry Sawyer lives a little ways from us and is an awful busy body. It was her that said to Jim when Jamesy died, "sposen it was Sis." But I knew the minnistar wan't refurring to her and I was awful ashamed of Sis for not knowing what he meant. But he looked reel plessent and after he had clared his throat and looked out of the winder a minnit he begun to tell things about his own child hood. He sed as a little boy he was always a thirsting for nolledge. She askt me afterwoods what thirsting for nolledge was and I says, "Aint you ever been so awful thirsty that the more water and tea and everrything you drunk the thirstyer you was?" "Yes," she says, "espeshelly after a salt cod dinnar." Well, I told her that showed it wassent drinks she needed for thay didnt squench her thirst but it was something else and that something else was nolledge. I like to explain

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

sech things to Sis, she always listens so re-speckful.

By and by Mame and Mandy come into the setting-room, looking their best, and looked awful surprised to see company. Mame give me the wink and I went into the kitchen. She had put on a red 4-in-hand to kivver up 2 buttens that was gone from her waste and she looked reel handsome. She always looks her Best when there is company because then she is happy. One of Jim's pet names for her is Misery, because she likes company. But she generally wants a week to prepare for it so to have things in style. She would never darst to invight any one like the minnistar spontaneous but Providence ordained otherwise. I went into the kitchen and tackled the 2 jorbs of getting supper ready and keeping the young ones still. It proved to be all one because to keep them subdued I had to give them about all the supper

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

there was. By and by Mame came out acting awful worked up and says, "O Jen! what be we going to do? Mandy has invitged him to supper and he says he will. O why was Mandy sent to afflick and torment us?" and she began to cry. I didnt call to her mind that Mandy wassent sent to her, but she come to where Mandy was when she married, but I says, "Now don't you cry and get your eyes all redded up. I'll fix it all right. The children has been to supper and Sis can take them to bed so they wont trouble us at the table."

"Oh!" she says; "if they have been to suppar there wont be nothing left on the table." And she begun to cry all over again. "Besides," she says, "this is pay night and how do we know what shape Jim is coming home in?" "Now don't you worry about that nor nothing else," I says. "I will let you know when suppar is ready. Go quick into the setting-room. Who knows what foolishness Mandy is getting-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

off in there? It appears to me that is where your duty lays."

Then I raced up stairs and told all about it to Mrs. Hennersy and asked her to lend me some hearty vittles if she had any on hand. She was tickled to death to help because I had never borrerred nothing of her before and Ellen also. Ellen was setting by the winder in the twylight looking white and lonesome and like the shadder of death was over her, but you had ought to see how she spryed round soon as she saw we needed help. She follerded me down stairs with an azalium plant in her arms that Dinny had give her on her berth-day, and was her most precious objeck in the world and put it on the middle of the supper table. Then she put a screen in front of the cooking-stove that had roses and cubeps painted on it. After that, while the pop overs was baking she run up stairs and fetched down three big pictures to hang on the wall to kivver up some bad..

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

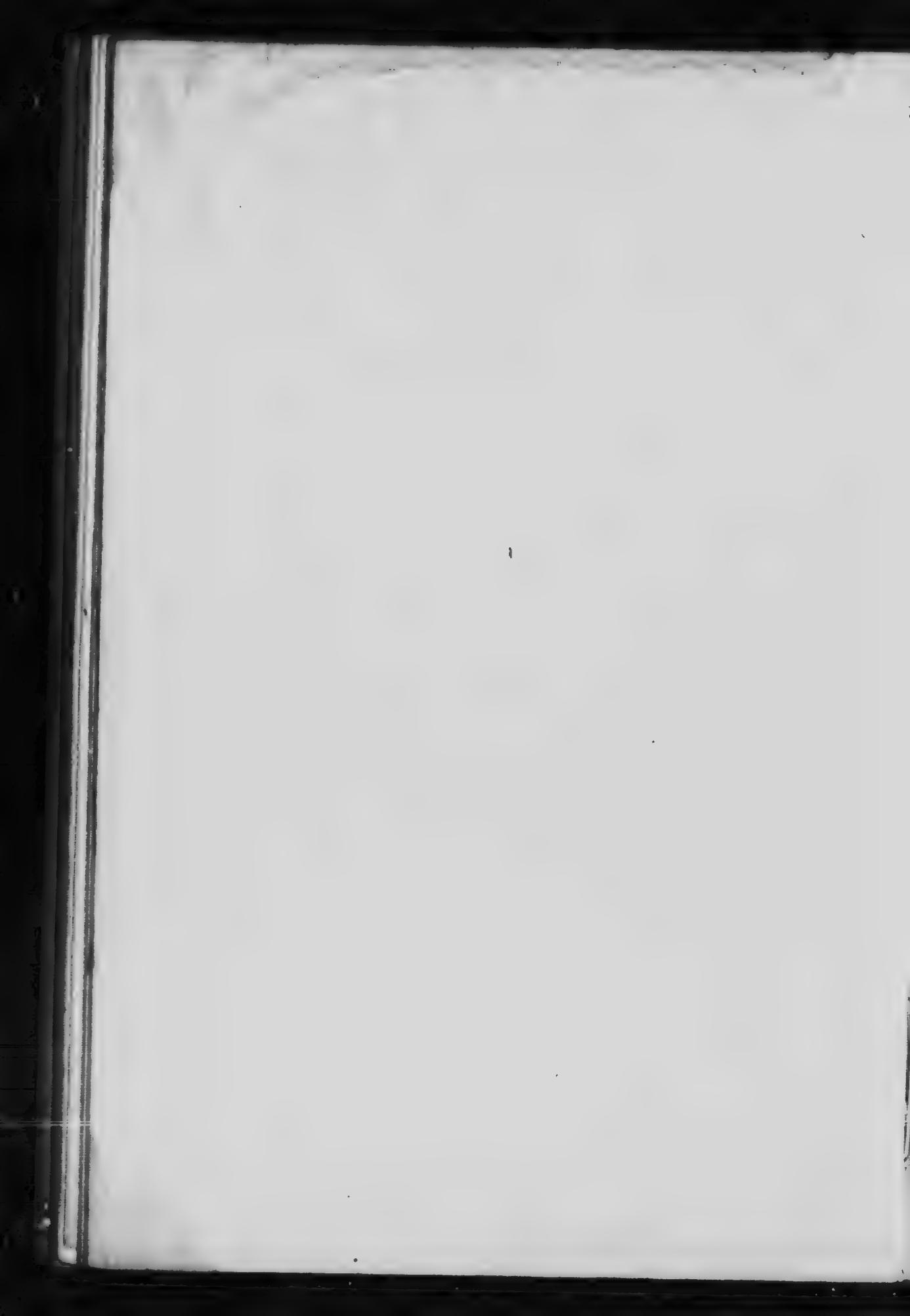
looking spots. One was a beautiful basket of fruit of all kinds, and another was called Venus rising from the sea. This one had been give to Mrs. Hennersy by a diseased freind and she thought the world of it. But Venus was clothed kind of scanty for this climate so she had cut out a costoom out of a fashion plate and pasted it on her figger so nice, and neat that it looked like it had always been there. The muff in her hand looked as natural as life. I remember Dinny framed it up for her again after she had rectified it.

The third picture was jest Saint Patrick holding the handle of an umbreller. I hung this up behind where the minnistar was to set if all went well.

It done me good to watch Ellen while she was rassling round. I never see her so bright and excited. She was up on a box that was atop of a chair twining her ivorys round one of the winders when Jim come in. We saw to once that he was all right



*She followed me down stairs with an azaleum plant in her arms that
Dinny had give her on her birthday*



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

but he himself seemed to be the only one to doubt it. He looked round the room and says, "Where be I? I vow I aint been taking anything but this don't appear to be my house." When he caught sight of Ellen he says, "And a beautiful angel up in the air throwed in."

I told him to quit fooling and to look in and help, telling him in a few words, what was going forrad. He washed up at the sink and was combing his hair when he spied the picture of Saint Patrick. "Look here, Jen," he says, "do you see anything at the bottom of that picture?"

"Nothing but a few snaiks. Why do you ask?"

"O, nothing!" he says; "I just thought I would ask."

Course he noticed the change in Ellen and says, "How do you do, Miss Hennersy; when did you get back among us?" Then she sarced him back and seemed just like old times. She was putting an azalium

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

flower into his button hole when the door opened and in walked Mr. Spinney. He looked awful thin and tired but brightened up when he saw her. "I wish something like that would happen to me," he says.

I invitited him to stay to supper but he says, "No I can't; but it smells and it looks awful good." And he went off up them 2 flights of stairs to his lonely room, with no chearful voice to greet him or smooth his burning brow, and like as not the thermoneter somewhere round 38 or 40.

When everything was ready Ellen gave me a hug and wished me good luck and skipt up her one flight of stairs. I says, "Jim, do you suppose there will ever be anything between them two?"

"Nothing," he says, "but a floor same as there is now." But I wan't thinking of arkitexcher.

I was awful proud when I went to the setting-room door and says, "Please walk out to supper." We had steak, fryed po-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

taters, hot pop overs, apple sarce, dough-nuts and ice-cream. Jim had gone out and bought the ice-cream. It was scented with vaniller.

Mame looked handsome enough at the head of the table in Mrs. Hennersy's best chair. She was bright and happy and entertaining. So was Jim when he told funny storys about the folks down to Chictooset where we used to live. I thought the minister would die a laughing. He liked the vittles, too, and he told some interesting antecdotes about his collidge days. Something was said about the children and he said he would like to see them agane. "No time like the pressant," says Jim; and what did he do but take a lamp and lead the way to where they was asleep. He says, "The only time they are still enough for any one to have a good look at them is when they have forgot their miseries in sleep."

They all looked hearty and rosy, but I have seen cleaner faces than they pro-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

dooced, because they had been put to bed in sech haste. It was no secret what Bub had had for supper because there was a wreath of flap-jack crumbs and molasses round his mouth where his tongue couldent reach. The minnister says as he looked at the littlest one, "This is a beautiful child, is he the baby?"

"Yes, the baby pro tem," says Jim. "You see what an expressible face he has. I often see him with his sole in his eyes," tenderly extracting his foot from behind Gussy's ear.

"You had ought to be a very happy man, Mr. Allen," says the minnister.

"So I be," responds Jim, "more than you can tell. You don't know what it means to have them all asleep."

When Mr. Oglevie went away he shook hands all round and says, "Mr. and Mrs. Allen I ain't had sech a plessant visit in a long time." When he come to Mandy he says, "I am cheafly indetted to you, Miss Allen, for the playsure, and I thank you."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Nobody had ever called her Miss Allen before and she was awful pleased about it.

This is why I didnt get your sewing done as soon as I calkilated.

Your true friend,

Jennie Allen.

Mame says he talked lovely to her about Jamesy and it done her a lot of good.

XI

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

Yesterday Mrs. Ezry Sawyer come in rigged up equal to the queen of Sheby and she would of looked awful nice if it wan't for her face which is hombly in the extream. The dots on her new veil wasn't large enough or close enough together to conceal this painful fack, although one of them artfully kivvered a good sized mould. She had on a plum-colored velvet gownd that we'd seen in Clapp & palmer's window a couple of days before. The figger that had it on in the winder hadn't ever wore anything but good close; and you would know it to look at it, it looked so carm & peaceful; but Mrs. Sawyer kep ayanking herself round as if she couldn't forget she was rigged up to an uncommon degree.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

She is awful thin and long-favored and has got a funny jaw and little bits of eyes.

One night last winter when she was coming home late, she heard a man follerering behind her. She was awful scared and hastened her steps but he hastened his, too, and bymeby he says, "Wouldn't you like company home?"

Then she turned round and faced him and said, "Young man, aint you ashamed of yourself?"

He took one look at her and says, "Yes, I be," and run off quick as he could in the other direction. When she tells the story she says it shows the power of the human eye.

She had everything on in proportion to the plum-colored gown. There was white plumes on her hat rigged up so high she had to scooch to come in the door, and a cock tail on the side. Around her neck was a long gold chain with ammythiss every little while, and on the end was a

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

gold lordgenetty. Mame said after she had gone that if she had darsted to look at her through that foolish implement she would have drove her out-doors.

We see she was dretful excited about something and so I wasn't surprised when she drawed her chair clost up to mine where I set sewing and says, "Jennie, I got something awful important to talk over with you. You have done a good many kind turns for me in the years our ways has led together in the past and now I have got a chanst to pay you back in overflowing measure."

Then she went on to tell how her son Ben that lives clear out to Seattle, state of Washington, had made some good investerments in land and these good close was among the producks of his success.

"I have wore them in, Jennie, for a kind of an objeck lesson because I want you to make some money like he did." She

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Showed me a letter he had wrote and in it he said he had made 5 thousand \$ in 6 months buying and selling opshens. He wound up by saying, "Send on all the spare cash you can rake up, Mother, and I can double it or tribble it in a month and maybe longer."

Then she told me she had took all her money out of the bank and was in the ack of sending it to him; "only," she says, "I thought I would come and get yours to put along of it, because you can see buying and selling opshens is the most prophetable busi-
ness there is."

Now I have got most 75 dollars but I still call it Jamesy's and I have got plans laid out for that. But I says, "Why don't he send the opshens on by express and let us sell them for what we can get for them here?"

She busted right out alaughing at this and says, "You big goose, Jennie Allen! opshens

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

aint anything that can be expressed." And I found they wasn't when she tried to explain about them.

"Well," I says, "I don't want to say anything against Ben, the best-hearted feller ever lived, but after the way you've explained it I don't see how it is any different from gambling. As I look at it if you are foolish enough to spend your money that way your only hope is to find somebody still more foolish that cackleates to find a bigger fool still, and everybody has got to look out not to be the last one."

"There is plenty of these last ones left over from the last boom," I says.

"Then," I says, "you say that what has made reel estate go kiting up so like all possessed is on account of them two capitalists that is mad with each other wanting to buy the tidelands to keep each other out. Now aint that a worthy foundation to build a fortune on!"

How much better it would be if their

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

minister, or some other person, would go to one of them and say, "Now, James, aint you and Mr. H—— quarreled long enough? And dont you want to make up with him now and shake hands? Remember there is another world where there is no tidelands and no opshens." Besides, look at the O'Lympics! In the presence of sech big and glorious mountains with their summits lost in the mistery of the clouds how can you have thoughts that is mean and petty? And as for Mount Rainier (which Ben says they can see several times a year when the fog lifts) I should think when the mists do clare away you couldn't help saying, "Look here! I don't want no tidelands. I'm going up on the heighths." Then the other man wouldn't want any tidelands and there wouldn't be no boom, and no gambling.

Most of the trouble in this world comes from folks wanting the same thing (whether it's masculine, femmynine, or

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

newter) when they could get other things jest as good or better. If society could be made to rest on a Jack Spratt and his wife basiss how much happier everybody would be. Now I have always inclined to the notion that Mrs. Spratt liked lean meat jest as well as anybody else; but when she found (soon after her marriage, probbably) that her husband was extry partial to it, in order to preserve harmony she started right in to cultivate a taste for fat. On this account I have always looked on her as the model wife.

Seeing she couldn't defend the soarce of the money, Mrs. Sawyer tried to temp me (only for my own sake—she had nothing to gain) by telling what I could do with it. She said I was flying in the face of Providence not to take this chanst. "Wouldn't you like," she asked, "to have Sis take lessons on the pianner? And wouldn't you like to have anybody as handsome as Mame wearing beautiful close?"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

For a minute I thought how splendid Mame would look in the purple velvet gownd and the big white plumes, and how proud Jim would be of her. Then I called to mind he couldn't be more proud of her than he was already and as for Sis she could pick out quite a lot of tunes on the organ by ear and that's enough for the pres-sant.

"And you could all go down to Chictoo-set nex spring same as you've always wanted to. It don't look as if the children would ever see the old place."

This was the strongest argument of all but I only says, "I always hope they will and I am going to keep on hoping; but the money must come some other way."

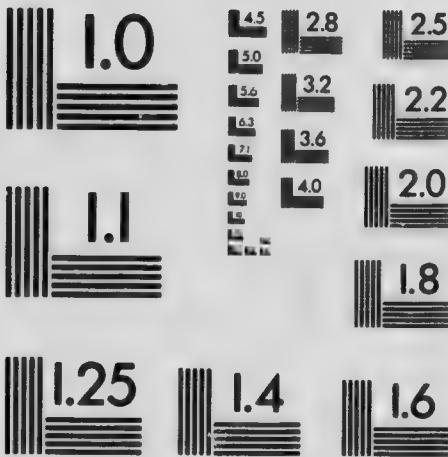
Jest then Bub who was leaning against my chair and listening says, "I want to go down to Chictooset now, Aunt Jennie, and see the place where Father caught the tom-cods and where he most got drownded."

"There!" says Mrs. Sawyer; "out of the



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

mouths of babes and sucklings you have a direck call. A little child shall lead them."

"Go right out to play, Bub," I says, "and some time we will all go to Chictooset."

He begged to stay and watch the strings in the lady's neck pull up and down when she talked, but I made him go. At last she found it wan't no use to argew and so she left but with the intentions of renewing the onslaught. I am reel sorry she is disappointed becaus she was trying to do me a kind turn and I hope she wont lose her little all she is taking out of the bank.

I don't know as I have told you that some of them tidelands they are so fierce to get aholt of has 10 feet of water on them at high tide and Ben has ben swimming on one lot that cost thousands of \$. I didn't know they put sech a high vallew on cold water in the west.

Jim saw Mrs. Sawyer when she was going out and he says, "Whence comes that ra-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

diant vision? and why wan't I warned of it so I could put on my smoked glasses?"

But when I told him the gorgous rai-
ment was put on to help a kind and freindly
mission he didn't say nothing more. I
didn't tell Jim what the freindly mission
was for fear he would yield to the opshen
temptation. To be sure he hasn't got much
money but there aint any one knows him
but would lend him in a minute and it aint
safe to be so trusted as that. Nothing is
much more dangرسome than unlimited
credit. It aint pleassant to be looked upon
with distruss but it shuts off opportunitys
to go wrong. Jim aint got that safeguard
so I am going to proteck him all I can.

I will let you know how her venture ex-
terminates as soon as she finds out.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XII

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

You ask me to tell you about the trades pickanick and I will. I want there myself because I had an order for rappars sent in the night before. They had a splendid time and so much happened they aint hardly got through with the narrowation of it yet. Sis said it was a Scarlet lettar day, when she meant red lettar. When they started out Mame said her and Jim would walk ahead and Sis and Mandy and the boys could foller behind at a Respecktable distants, on account of it not being Genteel to have sech, a large fambly of little ones. They made a splendid looking cupple. She woar her new sute and her lingering hat that she has wore most 4 years but she washed it and done it up and it looked as good as new and

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

he had on the dress sute I told you about. A lady where I went to take home some work was going to send it to the second hand shop with othar close, when I said I would perchess it for my Brothar. Mame alwers wanted Jim to have one and this was awfull reasonable. The lady didnt want to tack a cent for it but I told her I didnt want it without she charged me jest what she would the second hand man. (Mr. Spinney asked me how I knew he was a widower.) Jim jest put on the coat for the pickanick and woar golf trousers with it because he knew he would have to fool more or less round the water with the little boys and golf trousers would be the best for that. He woar a nice loose outing shirt, white with pink dots, and his tie was a nice chearful green. Altogether, I tell you we felt pretty proud of him. He is tall and big and when he straitens up he looks jest like a Poleeceman. Well, him and Mame started off togather to walk to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

where they took the barges, and I had a Struggle trying to keep the children back till they had a good start. They squirmed pretty good and when I let them loose it was all Sis and Mandy could do to keep them to the proppar pace. It want very long befoar Mame happened to look behind and see the Baby crying to iake aholt of mother's hand. Her tendar woman's hart couldent stand it. She waited for them to ketch up and grabbed the little fellar up, saying, "Mother's precious baby! was they trying to keep him away from her? Naughty, naughty sister." Women are on-reasonable at times and I guess Sis thinks so, too. Mame forgot to be genteel and told Jim he had got to carry Baby. Then they went alont, the othar young ones dancing and capering round them. Folks smiled as they met them, but they didn't care. The way Jim was dressed kind of added dignity and sobriarty to the whole

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

proceeding. Mandy & Sis carried the lunch basket between them.

They had expeckted Mr Spinney to be a membar of the party, but he wan't able to go. When they was ready to start out he come down all dressed up ready to go. When he saw Jim's new close he smiled with pleasure and was going to say something. Then he sobered down. I know why. He was thinking why he hadent ever been abel to perchess a dress sute. "All aboard!" he says, and grabs the pickanick basket with one hand and Bub with the othar. When he saw me setting down to the machine bare headed he wanted to know what was up. I told him rappars, and as he stood there he claped his hands to his head as if in violent pain. Then he says he dassent go on account of a dull pain between the eyes passing round his temple, kind of looping the loop and fetching up behind the back of his ears, as well as he could describe it.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Jim told him the fresh air was jest the thing for that particklar kind of a head aik. But he said no, fresh air alwers seamed to aggravate and intencerfy that special brand. So they went off without him. It made me feel awful bad for him to lose all that fun and pleasure and I beged him not to stay home. But he said he was ackchelly onfit for the exertion. "In fack," he says, "it would be an exertion for me to clime them stairs; so if you don't mind, I'll lay right on this loung' a spell."

Of course he was wellcome and I told him so. He laid down and I took up my sowing, after I had give him a shawl to wrap round him. "I don't want no shawl," he says. "My room was so hot last night that if I had died I woudent have noticed any differance."

By and by he give a grown and I says, "Aint there nothing I can do?"

"Well," he says, "when I used to have this kind to home the only thing that would

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

releave them would be Mother rubbing my head."

"I wisht she was here to do it now," I told him; "but Mrs. Hennersy is fine in sickness and maybe she'll do it," and I riz up to call her.

"No, no! I couldent stand the confusion of another person round. Couldent you do it for a minnit or two, Jen?"

So I set by him and rubbed my hand gently acrost his head back and forth till he got kind of drowsy and dropped off to sleep. Jest as he droped off he murmured "Mother!" and I guess he thought it was his mother because as I riz up and was about to leave him he says kind of sleepy, "Don't go, Mother," and took aholt of my hand to keap me with him. So I stayed there and passed my hand soothing acrost his brow. As I looked down on his face it struck me how many tired lines had come there lately. They didnt show when he was awake and carrying on but there they was. And I

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

knew that every line was a good line. Not one had been writ there by dizzypation. He had worked hard all his life and had nothing to show for it. He shed cheer about him wherever he went, but folks was unconscious that it radiatored from him. It aint an easy jorb to be an insurance agent and poke yourself into shops and offisses where you aint wanted and take sass and sometimes hinted you had bettar leave. Many's the time he has persuaded men to take out a Pollissy agenst their will and they have left their famblys well fixed on account of it. Widders has come to bless him for what he has done. One of them sent him a fansy little pen wipar only last Christmas because through his percyverence & powars of inducement she had got some thousand dollers. And his sins of commission is very few, if any.

As I was thinking of all this, looking down on him and smoothing his brow, I forgot all about my rappars that had to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

be took back to-morrow. When they did come to me with resounding foarce, I tried to rize up again but again he murmured "Mother," and clung to my hand. I couldn't leave him then. And it was some time before he stirred and then opaned his eyes. I felt awfull foolish and went and set right down to the machine.

He follers me and says, seeing I have lost so much preshus time on his account, that he was going to help me sew on the machine. Se he sowed while I baisted and he sung funny songs to the companyment of the buzzing of the wheels. He is splendid compenny.

By and by we finds out he had been sowing yards and yards after the bobbing was out, so the seams wa'n't sowed at all. We have a good laugh at that and then he says kind of serious, "Jen, a man sozzling along without a wife is like sowing without no under thread. It might jest as well not be done at all." And it made me wish

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

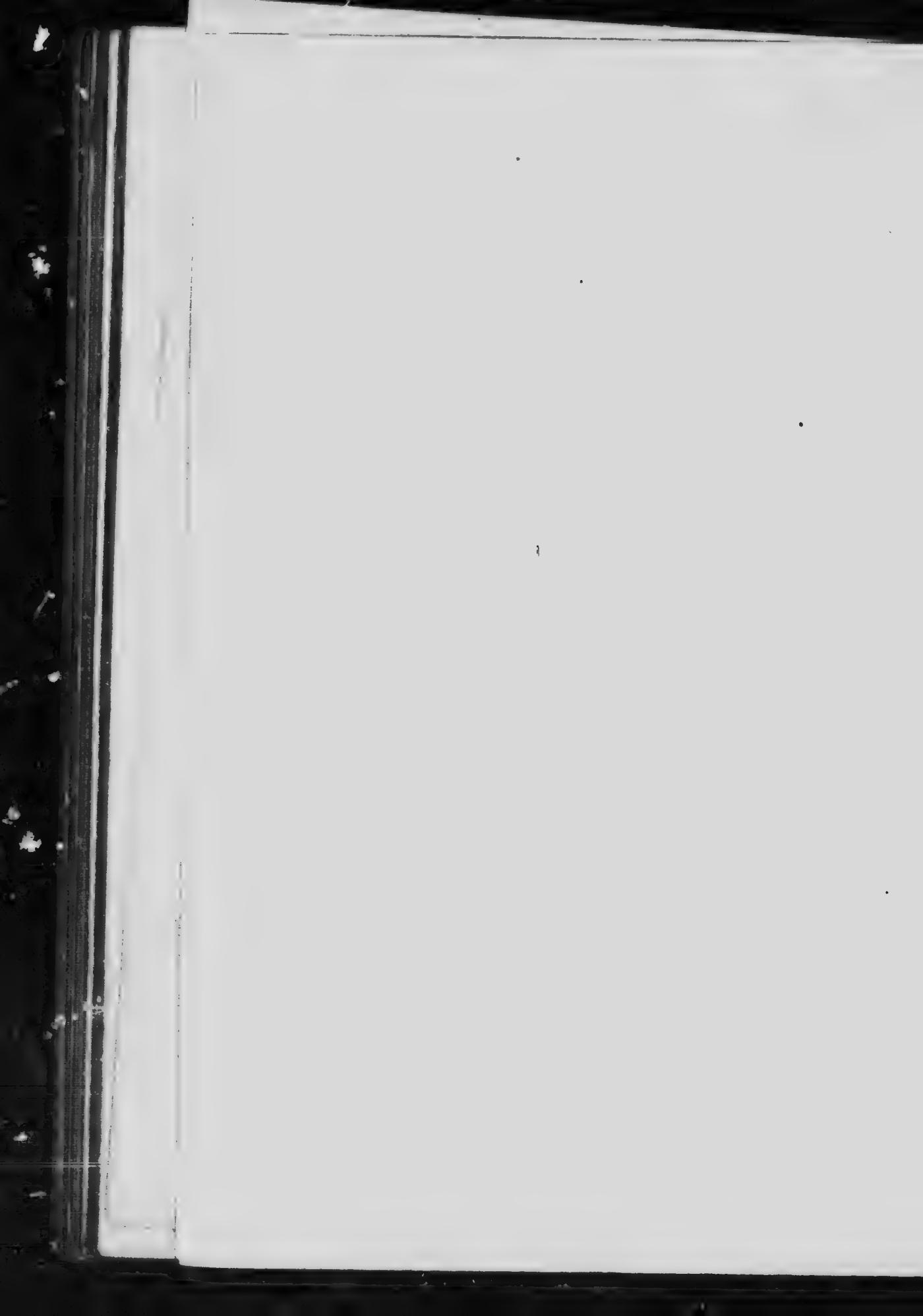
Ellen would be kinder to him. I told him so and said I hoped he woudent get discurraged.

When dinner-time comes he says he is going to preair our midday feast and he flew around a setting the table. I told him there was nothing to eat in the house. Then he went for the woman's collum in the Journal, to see if he couldent use up some left ovars, making a dainty and palpable dish. "Them reseats," I says, "was made up by some body in a boyless household. We don't have no left ovars here. Furthermore than that, the dishes is cleaned out so thorough at the table that washing them is like gilding refigned gold."

He was gone befoar I got through speaking, but soon returned from the Bakery where he had bought all kinds of beautiful eatables. They tasted awfull good. I hadent evver et a sharlot roosh befoar. They are 10 cents & not much to them. We was both hungry and done justiss (without



"Jen, a man sozzling along without wife is like sowing without no
under thread. It might jest as well not be done at all"



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

mercy) to all the lovely vittles. Then he put on my big apern and said he was going to wash all the dishes and he done it, capering round, and cutting up and making believe he was this, that and the othar person and he acted them all out perfeck.

It wan't no wonder in the excitement he dropped one of the cups and I was sorry to hear him say "the devil!" when he picked it up and saw a little piece gone out of it.

"Please don't swear," I says, "that piece has ben gone this long time."

"That's what I said—the old Nick."

When he had to leave and go off on some business, the house seamed awfull lonesome without the folks. I was glad enough to see them when they come and they all said they had a splendid time. I asked if the children had been good. "Course not," says Jim; "how could they have a good time if they was good? They acted like the old scratch, every durned one of em."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

When Mr. Spinney come in to hear about
the pickanick Jim asked him what he had
done for his head aik. "Nothing to speak
of," says Mr. Spinney.

So no more at pressant from
Your true freind,
Jennie Allen.

XIII

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I am writing to say that My last letter must of been a sight on the outside. I sent Bub out to male it and when he came rushing back his hands was full of graip and benanner skins and he looked awful happy and red in the face. "I guess," he says, "there wont be no moar axidents from old folks slipping down from here clear up to Bennett's corner. I been collecting all the pealings that was dropped and here they are!" chucking them into the coal hod that was setting side of the stove beaming round on us all.

"Look here!" says Mame; and she went for him pretty lively about him getting his hands dirtyed up clawring round in the guttar. I didnt say nothing but I thought

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

it was a noble deed to remove fruit pealings and sech from under the tottering steps of age that aint got but a few more totters to the grave. Folks aint any right to go along eating and dropping their skins on the side walk. Bub saw an old man slip down on one of them last weak and that was what put them into his head. He was put into the ambulants and took to the horspittle. Bub says h. knows he was poor because his toes was ou. and he give him his 10 cents. Most probably he wasent extry familier with the insides of benanners or orranges. At sech times it seams as if that was the way of the world. A few folks enjoy the fruit and othars slips down on the pealings. No, I couldent say nothing to Bub then but when I washed the dirty little hands that was so quick to run to othar peoples help I done it with a kind of revverence. How many sins of omission we commit trying to keap our hands clean! This is called to mind by what the ministar said last Sun-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

day. He told us there was 2 kinds of sins,—sins of commission or them we commit, and sins of omission or them we omit to commit. I should hate to be gilty of this last kind.

I jest give Bub 2 cookys instead of 1 and told him he mussent forget he was going to the park with me nex Sunday if nothing happened. "Something has got to happen," says Mame, "or he can't go. How about the Sunday pants that aint much more than planned Out yet?" Seeing the tears come into his eyes I told him aunt Jennie would see that the pants fulfilled their part of the contrack. That being the case I mussent write any more now, because I have got to hurry up on my rappar order so as to squeeze in the pants befoar Sunday. It aint so easy as it appears to the sooperficial eye to get two pairs out of one of Jim's. It's a triunth to do it, though, especially when Mr. Spinney says it's a work of genius. And he says it every time. Once I tried

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

to coax Jim to buy two succeeding pairs of pants alike because I felt almost sure I could get five small pairs out of two of his but he declined not to do it. He said with his love of variotty and change of environment he wan't quite prepared to make that sacrifice for the nex generation. "Unless," he added, "you want to spread yourself, Jen, and win some of them enconiams sech as is dear to your heart."

I do like the enconiams but they dont injure the appearance of Bub and Gussy which is the cheaf objeck of my work. They are only side producks. And when there is a good side-produck, I say, grab it. Only don't let it come first. Mame don't have as much patience sewing as she might. She says she has heard of tailers using glew on male garments instead of sewing them. But I tell her while that might be adapted to nice sedaitable old gentlemen that jest sets and reads their Bibles, or at most takes a pleasant little walk in the semitary, that

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

with our little ones that is more likely than not to frisk around, it would be a diffrent mattar. Praps it's prejudiss but I never could have that settled down fealing of conferdence in the most highly recommended glew that I feal in number 40 linnen thread. In a delliket case like patching it might serve a good purpose and I know my mother would have used it judicious. Mother was a splendid patcher. It come as natural to her as the air she breathed. Many was the times down to Chictooset when folks would say to a man or woman or child "What a nice new coat (or dress) you've got!" and they would say, "It's the same one but Mrs. Benjamin Allen has tinkered it up for me."

Mother was not only daft with her neadle but she had a brain to execute and plan. She was full of resources and original devices a good deal like Benjamin West the artist when he made a brush out of a cat's tail. If the result was a passel of nice de-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

cent dressed people that was so poor they otherwise would of gone round looking like distress or stayed to home for shame wasn't that about as good as painting pictures that has now pretty much sunk into oblivian and wasn't cheerful to look at before they sunk? I've seen his "King Lear in a storm." It is the saddest picture I ever set eyes on and I wish I could forget it. I know the story about it wa'n't true but Mr. Lamb wouldn't of made it up or people woudlent have been so teched by it if there wasn't jest sech cases in life. To think of that crewel daughter sending the old father out without even his crown on his head. Of course it wouldn't have answered the purpose of a skull cap but fixed on with elastic it would have been better than nothing in sech weather and no doubt it was right handy where she could get at it. When I referred about it Mr. Spinney said it wasn't Lamb wrote the story but I had got my meats mixed and it was Bacon. I guess if he had dusted Lamb's

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

tails as often as I had on the parlor table he would know better. Of course Jim had to but in and ask if it wasn't Ham, seeing he had plenty of leisure in the ark. "Didn't he Noah lot about it?" he says. They like to jolly me but I like their pleasant ways and any way its a change from the noise of the sewing machine. Sis was telling the boys the other day what the dead languages is. "Is ours one?" inquired Bub. "Course!" says Jim, "Didn't you hear Aunt Jen murder the King's English?" I dont know what he meant but he and Mr. Spinney set up a shout and Mr. Spinney said it was only a case of mans-laughter. Then Jim give me a hug and Mr. Spinney told him to give me another and charge it to him. They mean all right.

No! Mother's patching and peacing never brought on a feeling of sadness. And Jim says how she used to rejoice in the rejubilation of an old garment as a surgeon does in an operation that gives somebody a new

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

leace of life. There aint so much differ-
ance in the two, either. One straightens
out your outside and the other your insides,
and in one way her work was greater. If
your liver and lights is out of order you
can conseal it from the criticle public but
a shabby cloak is known to all the world.
That reminds me of what Mr. Spinney said
once. He said a man doesn't live so much
according to his lights as according to his
liver.

Mother done a lot of sech work for peo-
ple that was too poor to pay her; but when
she was praised for it she said she done it
only about 50 per cent for charrity. The
rest was because she jest naturally loved
sech jorbs. But when Mother was got
ready to be laid away and them poor willin
and hard workin hands was folded in rest
I thought it would be a mean kind of a
recordin angel that woudent give her the
whole hundred per cent.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

One day she was sewing at Deacon Ingraham's and Mrs. I. fetched into the setting room a pair of pants that the deacon had wore a number of years, telling her to patch them neat same as only she could do.

"Well," says Mother, "bring along the patching peaces and I will see what can be done." Mrs. Ingraham done so, saying "Here they be!"

"What!" says Mother, "was the pants ever like them peaces?"

"They certainly was," says she; "they are what was left and have been kep in a bag up attick. There is a differance now but why dont you do what you have done so many times before and put the peaces on the close line to fade?"

(Mind you the peaces was a dark seal brown and the trousers had faded to a light golden snuff color.)

"Mrs. Ingraham!" Mother broke out; "them pants has been fading on the deacon

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

for nigh on to ten year and how can the patch peaces catch up with them in half an hour? There's reason in all things."

"Well," says Mrs. Ingraham (kind of ashamed because they had money laid by and there wasn't no call for her to skimp and skew at the expence of Mother's brains) "jest do the best you can. He probably wont ware them much more now excep choaring round in the garden. I'm going down to the post office store."

When she came back Mother held up the pants in triunth.

"Hannah Allen!" says Mrs. Ingraham in a joyous tone; "what on earth have you done to them pants! I can't see whare the patches leave off and the pants begin!"

"I scorched the peaces a little," says Mother as carm as if she hadent been doing something nobody else in creation would of thought of. And so fur from choring round in the garden with them he wore them to church the next Sabbath. (He



"Hannah Allen!" says Mrs. Ingraham in a joyous tone; "what on earth have you done to them pants! I can't see where the patches leave off and the pants begin!"



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

want an Episcopalian.) Maybe thare was something in that because not long after that Mother heard a nabor say "How feable old deacon Ingraham is getting. I notice it more in his gait than anything else." He probably had on the snuff collered pants.

Jim said that after 'he process they'd ben through they must of ben better adaptuated for that than anything else. It's true he didn't darst to make any quick or sudden motion in walking or anything else. He had to go quite cautious remembering always what he was wearing and governed himself accordingly. But what you gain in one way you lose in another. That's the law of the universe, and Mother couldn't change that.

It was by one of Mother's innocent devices to conseal her poverty that we got our little home that is down to Chictooset. Father was took away verry sudden when we was all little and as if that wan't enough our old house also got burned up the saim

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

winter. Thare wasn't no insurance on eather one as father had always said he did-dent have no Monney to throw away on fire Insurance companys. She went round sew-ing by the day when she could. Jim and Mandy went to school and I kep house. We had 2 rooms in a woman's house. It was almost more than mother was equall to to find somethin for us to vittle up on. Father used to tell her thare was good money coming to him as he had lent sums to some people in his Prosperity that was now able to pay. But he nevvar mentioned no Names and here was mother aloan on the sea of life not knowing who to dun. Father could never reely afford to lend money but thare was always a queer streak in the Allens. They would be awful mean and near with thare famblys and would rave and tair round if much buttar was used in the cook-ing (grandmother Allen's privet reseat books reflects that) and yet would lend money to tom dick and Harry without

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

hardly any fuss. In father it was worst of all. Thank goodness thare aint no sines of it in Jim or the childern and I got a theory that it reached its highest point (or climax) in father, came to a head and busted.

I'm a great believer in herredity, because I know if it dont come out one way it will in another. There was a man down to Chictooset that stuttered something terrible; but he managed to stammer out a proposal of matrimony and she said yes. In due coarse of time a dear little baby boy was born to them named Willie, but it wan't a great while (and here comes the saddest and curiouset part of my story) it wan't a very great while before he was found to be a deaf and dumb mute by hollering and setting off fire crackers and tin pans and anything they wanted to right under his nose and he didn't move a mussle. Broken-hearted as his payrents was there was one gleam of brightness in this sad and sollem

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

picture. Their little child could never inherit his father's ailment.

But when he got big enough to go to one of them mute alphabet schools and learned it, what did he begin to do but stutter with his fingers! It made his teachers awful nervous to see him recite, especially as his little school-mates used to giggle to see his fingers rub together and flop round jest like his father's tongue when he tried to get anything out—or off, I had ought to say. If that don't show the onresistable foarce of heriddity I should like to know what it does show!

I was made to think of this the other day when Mr. Spinney showed us a note from his friend Shannon Brien (grandson of Felix O'Brien of Pawtucket) signed R. H. Brieno. Him and Mr. Spinney is studying Esperanto and that was what the note was writ in. Probably you know already what Mr. Spinney told us, that in Esp into every noun, no matter whether it's propper

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

or impropper, has to end with an O so there hadn't ought to be anything anyways startling to see the signature, R. H. Brieno. But what I done was to yell out, "There's his grandfather's O back again!" He'd dropped it in the 70's.

Jim takes after father in size. He is big & tall like all the Allens. Mother was a Shattuck and they was diffrent. The Shattucks was all ladys from the word go and they wassent one of them but what kep a riding waggon and rode in stile to meeting and the fare insted of hoofing it like common folks. They wassent rich but thay was good providers on that side. Jim's childern comes from a good and generus stork. But Mother was a little mite of a thing (Sis is as much like her as 2 peas) and I spose opposits attack. Mother had another Offar befoar she took up with father. It was a sea capten that was a funny looking wizened up little man with a hook nose and kind of bent up dubble

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

but a kind and honest hart and money in the bank that he plaiced at Mother's disposal which she declined. Some of her relations demonstrated with her saying that he was a sea capten and went to forrin parts and she could have so many little curiositys. "Yes," says she, "if thay looked like thair father thay would be little curiositys."

Soon after she was left a widder her bosom freind, Mrs. Alvarus B. Whinney, died and she didn't have no gloves for the funerell. Mother was a naturel born lady and nevver enjoyed a funerel unless she was sootably and respectively Dressed. She nevver borrhored anything, not even Trubble. She couldn't stay away from the funerell and it was Borne in upon her with equell foarce that she couldent go without gloves. Jest as plane as if it was wrote in fire in the Heavens was the other remaindering fack that she couldent buy any Gloves. But sech things didnt faze Mother a great while. On the morning of the day

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

when Mrs. Whinney, the neatest woman in Chictoooset and her dearest freind, was to be laid quietly away among the flowers that showed in what Esteam the diseased was held while she was blacking the stove a thought came to her that she pursewed to a practical end.

She went to the funerell, set with the Moarners, and folks said she was the most Genteel persen pressant. Everything went off fine. But it struck Mother kind of funny that there should be cornsiddable dust on the parler tables and chares because Mrs. Whinney was a duster first and a woman afterwards. She beleaved that Clenliness was nex to godlyness but she rated it nex higher instead of lower. It was said nobody had scarcely ever seen her without a dust cloth somewhares about her person and no fly was allowed inside of the front gate. Well, Mother was thinking of this and wondering how she could Lay thare so carm and peacefull when you could

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

write your name on the furniture when all
to once she was Startled by hearing the
preacher say "Our dear Departed one will
return to dust!"

It gave her quite a turn. Before she left
the house old Squire Henbury that is as
rich as creases and hadn't seen her since
Father died came up to her and held out
his hand as he asked her how she did. She
didn't take his hand and he, thinking she
didn't notice his, made a grab to take aholt
of hers. She pulled it away without letting
him touch it and marched out with her
cheeks burning and her little head held
high same as it always was when she was
mortifide to death and wanted to hide it
somewheres.

Next day she got a letter from him say-
ing he didn't blame her for the way she
treated him but money had been awful tight
and he was calkilating to pay her later on,
seeing she didn't really nead it. (That
shows how well she consealed her povarty.)

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

But seeing how she felt about it he was making some sacrifices to pay her half of the \$786.64 now which was what the principal and interest amounted to and the rest in 3 months.

Praps she didnt jist about go craizy for joy. This meant a home for us all because she had a sellar towards it already besides the land. She had tryed to sell it but nobody wanted it and now she saw everything had worked out for the best. In a story she would of been found unconscionable with the lettar clutched in her hand. But that wan't Mother. She had put off the weak's wash, not fealing equel to it but now she was so excited and nerved up she got out the tubs and set Jim to fetching water from the well. You know how put-off washes grow. Well this was a rouser. But Mother done every scrap of it and hung them out by moonlight. She couldent sleep that night but she didnt want to. She was so happy she wanted to lay awake and en-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

joy it. She knew then that the squire had judged rightly that she knew nothing of the det but his gilded conscience had took a meaning from her refusing to taik his hand that she dreamed not of. Her hands was blacked with stove polish instead of gloves. I must close now. You see how it was about the lettar getting all soiled up. Bub will be more careful nex time.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XIV

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

We have had a party and it went off fine —all but the first hour of it, when I was afraid each one of the party would go off seperate, it was so awful dull. But first I must tell you how it happened. When Mrs. Ezra Sawyer's house took afire but most of it was spared by the all-devouring eliment, she made them take her best furnitoor and her bricky-back into our house till she returned from her Sister's whose arms opened to recieve her and her nerves had got all unstrung from the shock. The fire happened in the night. She was asleep and the flames broke out and when they Hollered to her she says she didnt hardly have time to recover herself and escaip. They was rich, handsome furnitoor and we was

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

so afraid of marring it up that Mame said we would poke our things into the kitchen and bedroom best way we could and set hers round in the parlor and setting-room. We all helped and my! if our rooms didn't look grand when we got through! It seamed like we was off somewhere on a visit. There was a solid oak center table which we placed in the middle of the parlor and set on it a big image with wings but no head. First off I thought it had got broke off by the fire but Mr. Spinney explained that it never had no head. I always heard that geniuses had queer notions but this was the funniest of all, making a woman without any head. Mr. Spinney said the artist being a sinnick about women and calkilating they didn't need no place to keep branes in might explain it. I thought praps it represented Mary, Queen of scots on her way to heaven, especially as there was something on it about it being executed

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

somewheres. Then we found at the side a little broken brass tag and all that was left of it was Victory of Sam— No doubt, then, it meant Uncle Sam and celebrated an American victory. Only the figger not having no head might mean he intended it not for any particklar nation or clime but for all nations and all climes—jest plain straight woman—and any kind of a face or head would give her away as belongin to some special one, same as the duch madonnas.

Jim said as she must have been a woman who only lost her head once, the thing was so onusual the artist seazed his opportunity.

Sis is awful matter-of-fack (she's almost pure Shattuck) and she thought the plaster had give out; that he used so much on them big wings there wan't none left for the head.

Mame said, "If a woman's got wings she don't need no head. She don't have to plan

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

to keep out of trubble when she can fly away from it. Still," she added reflectually, "I would incline to a head."

"Well, anyway," says Jim, "that makes 2 women I know that you can't get a head of."

By this time Sis had tried onto the boddy her new doll's head and much to every one's joy it fitted. A pink necktie fastened it on secure and there she was compleat.

While we was rushing round having such a good time fixing things up, Jim (who is tall & big and called kind of clumsy even by them that loves him best) stepped twice on the cat's tail.

"I'm awful sorry," he says, when she let out quite a sizable "yeouw," "but its on account of me being so lofty. I don't see her because she's so fur off."

"Yes, it's a case of 'fur off' all right," says Mr. Spinney, taking her up and examining her injerrys. "But you haddent ought to mutilate her like this."



*By this time Sis had tried onto the body her new doll's head and much to
every one's joy it fitted. A pink necktie fastened it on secure and
there she was complete*



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Diddent she mew till late herself last night? I had to throw everything at her I could find, even a box of matches."

"That was dangerous," says Mame.

"Yes," he says, "especially as they all of 'em lit on the cat. But I am sometimes foarced to give pain though I have a great sole."

"Sometimes because of it," says Mr. Spinney, glancing at his feet. "Come, Kit, you'd better repair to your cat-acombs," opening the seller doar for her to pass down.

When we was hanging the pictures he says "Here is a madonna by a living artist and I don't like it. I don't like any of the madonnas done by the living artists."

That didnt sound reasonable to me but I didnt say nothing. But Sis did. She says, "I should think their being alive would help out quite a lot when they was painting."

"Now this for instants," he says. "Look

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

at the stagy hair and pose. Somebody might inquire what actress it is."

"It's Mary AND her son," says Jim. Then there was a portrait of Marthy Washington painted in impressionistic stile that I didnt care for. I thought at first it was a maren view.

After everything had been put in place and we was standing round admiring it Mame says, "Let's have a party!"

Seeing Jim was about to speak she says, "Now, Jim Allen, don't you say a word! I know that we can't as well as you do; but let's send out the invertations quick, before we find out for sure we can't!"

Then she reminded us there was two Chictooseet ladys avisiting in the city and it woudent do no harm for them to go home and tell folks we was living in stile.

So Sis was sent right out with the invertations. It was going to be the next night and we had to hussle pretty lively to get ready. At first everything seamed to go

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

wrong. Mame and Mandy had poor luck with their doenuts. They soaked fat and was soggy. (I mean the doenuts did.) When Jim came in to suppar he heard Mame say, "Come, let's rest from our labors."

"They shall rest from their labors," he says, "and their works shall foller them," aiming a doenut at each one but missing them, I am glad to say.

When Mame remarked that we must count noses in making the cakes, Sis says, "Count 2 apiece for Mrs. Patterson and the Tortrums. Mrs. Patterson has got to bring her Aged mother-in-law that is hard of hearing, on account of fire or burglars, and the Tortrums is going to bring along their little boy 'cause there's no one to stay with him. His mother says she is going to take the libberty of letting him stay all night because she don't want to wake him up at 10 or 11. The docter says he mussent be broke of his rest."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Well, all right," says Mame; "only we mussent let his mother go into the boys' bedroom with him. It would give the whole thing away." The room is so full of our furnitoor the boys has to clime in over tables & chares and ondress on top of the organ. They'd been practicing it all day so as to do it in a noiseless manner when the time come. "Should she show any signs of follering him into the room," she continooed, addressing all pressant, "take what mezzures you can to keep her out. Don't stop at anything should sech a thing ockur."

"What can we tell her that is true?" I inquired, wishing to be armed at every point.

"Tell her anything that comes into your head. There is no times for childish scrooples. Trust to the Insperration of the moment and all the gumption you can command. If nothing else comes to you tell

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

her you think you sinell smoke in the front of the house and she had better get out as quick as she can."

"Then she'll want to save her boy."

"From what I know of the boy, that's the last thing she'd want to do."

And then we had to plan about othar things.

Soon as suppar the nex night, when I was ready to put on the other dress, I found it might jest as well be in North Utopia as fur as me getting it was conserned. It was in the Close press and between me and that close press was more things all on top of each othar than could be moved in 2 hours.

Mr. Spinney remarked afterwards that no one, to the best of his nolledge and ability, had ever been so close pressed for time.

I was standing in the entry wondering what Mother would do in a simular crisiss,

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

when Ellen came down to ask if there wan't something else she could tend to. (She had been helping all day and so had her mother). She was dressed for the party, in pink, and looked too pretty to be reel. She thought a minute as she looked at my old calico sack and skirt and then she says, "Come on up stairs. It wont do no harm to try."

I follererd her up and she took me right into her bedroom. "Now," she says, "is my chanst; I've alwers wondered what you'd look like in a decent—I mean kind of a stilish dress." When she took out a pretty blue one with a little white lace trimming, I says, "Please don't fool now, Ellen, dear; I know Mame will call me in a minute and I'm scared to face her. Tell me what I can do."

She didn't make no reply but in another minute she was squeezing me into the blue dress. "Hold in your breath," she com-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

mar ded. "More and more. There!" she says, "I have got it to, all but 2 hooks. Draw in again as if your life depended on it."

I done so, thinking perhaps it did. (Mame would feel bad if I wasent ready at half past 7.)

With Mrs. Hennersy's help I was in it at last. "Now set down here!" agane commanded Ellen; "and I'll fix your hair a little bit." And what did that girl do but fluff it up and rig it up into a Pompeydore. I woudent let her do sech a foolish thing any other time, but she had took possession of me and there was no time to argew. I had no breath for it either, the blue dress was so tight. My blood didnt circulate, and it all felt as if it had settled in my cheeks, for they looked as rozy as Ellen's when she showed me myself (what must be myself) in the glass. It was then half past 7 and I run down stairs. Mame

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

thought I was some one come to the party and she had ackchelly put out her hand to shake hands before she saw it was me.

"You look slick!" she says, and hollered for Jim to come and see me. I would of felt awful foolish if there was time to feal anyway which there wassent. They was a duzzen last things to attend to and poor Mame was on the verge of high sterrick's with nervous fateeg.

At last everything was ready and we all set down in the parlor waiting, Sis nearest the door to ancer the bell. But the bell seamed to be like the notes that "dont requier no ancer." We set and set and set and come to the Conclusion at lenth that nobody was coming to the party. The boys was saying, "Can't we eat up the treat?" when there came the long-expeckted sound of the bell. We all stood up and Sis pulled out her sash and went to the door. It was a man wanted to know if we wished to buy any soap. Another long period of distress-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ful and anxious waiting during which time me and Jim's lungs was trying to breathe in their unwonted imprisonment. Jim had on the same he wore to the pickanick, with the exceptions of him having on his light checked trousers instead of the golf ones. The evening coat was pretty tight.

Finally they began to arrive and then follered that othar distressful period to which I refurred at the beginning of my lettar. After we introooced them that dident know each othar and they all said, "I am pleased to make your acquaintance," there diddent seem to be anything more to say. We all set round in uttar silence. We couldent get the party started in. We had been undar the delusion that we had worked hard getting ready for the party, but here was a jorb on our Hands compaired to which the othar was nothing but twerling your thums. It was dretful. That silance grew and grew and time went on till you could hardly recolleck what a sound was.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Noboddy dasted to speak. Mame said afterwards she had to dig her nales into her parms to keep from screaming. They all looked at us as much as to say, "We defy you to entertane us." Then, again, they seemed in a voiceless way to reproach us. "We was in pleasant, happy, noisy homes and we nevar asked to come to you. You have bidden us here and to what end?" A woman clared her throte and we all jumped. I was awful proud of Mame when at last she said (her voice tremling) that it was quite mild for this season of the year. I knew what currige it took because any remar' projectted onto that silance was like speaking a peice on the tree-top. Some muttared out "Yes," but one woman who on that account I thought was cut out for a ruler in one of them french saloons, says, "But it aint healthy and there's considdable sickness will foller."

More silance, worse than befoar, because

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

this last sentance stayed in the air and we
kep ahearing it and ahearing it (in our
mind's eye) till it seamed like some dyer
profissey. It kep afloating round the room,
reverberating through your interiar then
getting loose agane and kerflambering
round till it seamed like they was playing
batterydore and shuttarcock with it. Jim
said afterwards he'd heard of lights that
makes the darkness visable, and here'd been
a sound that made the silance audable.

Down to Chictooset it was alwers so
differant. You could say, "Is your Plim-
muth rock alaying?" or, "Does your cow
give a good mess?" which would illicit a
reply sech as "Yes, she gives 12 quarts of
milk and thinks nothing of it," or, "We
get an aig from her every day of her life."
Then there would be a nice soshel talk
on objecks of common and uncommon in-
terrest. We all went to the same meeting
down there so we could always disgust the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

preacher and the sermen. Here everybody was a differant kind of a denomination.

Well, at last when we had about decided to vittle them up and let them get out alive from this living toom (Jim had kep alooking at his wach to see if it wan't time, but it wan't) the front doar opaned and in came Mr. Spinney. He went up to them he knowed and shook their hand good and harty, uttaring some cute and plessant remarks to each one, and he done the same to the new ones we introoooced to him. Then he says, "Ladies and gentlemen, I beleive you are not awair that I have come from the insultin of Turkey to entertaine you to-night. I am his Magesty's magician," and then he went on a long funny rigmarole that set everybody laughing, announcing he was going to give us examples of Turkish magic. "First, however," he said, "I must remove my coat." (Sure enough, the frost had all gone.)

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

When he came back he done all kinds of impossable things, or praps I should say improbable things. He took aigs out of his hat that was Empty, till Mame was afraid he would drop them on Mrs. Sawyer's beautiful rugs. She might have knowed he wouldn't. Then he put a ball under a dish and it come out a canary bird (our Dick), and all sech capers. No one could see how it was done and the last thing he done was to chainge a flag into a bunch of pinks and he gave a pink to each lady, and some of them was almost scared to touch one, fearing it would blow up, or something.

By this time there was so much laughing and hooting and talking going on you couldent hear yourself speak. Everybody thawed out and the Chictooset ladys had a hundred things to tell us and for us to tell them. They said I had improved for the bettar and said I looked years younger. I dident take no creddit to myself. I knew it was all the gownd and the Pompeydore.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Then we played games and among them was parler steaple chase.

Most probly you have seen it. Obstacles sech as the organ stool, the cuspydoar, the oil stove, a foot stool, a child's rocker, ect., is put along the lenth of the room and the gentlemen is told to take a good look at them, so to be familliar with the distance between them befoar they are blindfolded. Then you tell them they have got to walk from one end to the othar of the room blindfolded, stepping ovar the obstacles and not teching them. Well, all the men was blindfolded and then what did Mrs. Peterson do but take away all the obstacles so the men when they done the stunt was trying to step ovar imagery ones. It was the most fun I evar saw, they all felt so proud when they got to the end of the row without touching one (when they wassent there at all). I laughed till I cried to see Jim and Mr. Tortrum do it; they lifted their legs so high and so cautious.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

But when it was Mr. Spinney's turn I felt differant. Seeing him start out blindfolded with his hands held out before him and everybody tittering and wanting to see him made a fool of, it seemed so pitifull I couldn't stand it. So I made an excuse to go into the kitchen. I think what made me feel so was because it was so diffrent from usuel. He was always the one to practice joaks and to jolly people and it didnt seem naturel to see him the innocent vicktim of a trick. When I heard the shouts that told it had all been found out, I went back and he looked reel releaved when he saw I hadent been there. He was soon caperin around cutting up all kinds of shines.

Right in the midst of the tumult Mrs. Tortrum said she guessed she would go and see to McFarland (that was her boy) to find out if he was propparly tucked in and had said his little prare. I had accompanied them to bed and I had made them all say "Now I lay me" but that was all

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

they could carm themselves down to say. That one seems to go with high sperrits, being breaf and not requiering much composher.

Well, when she said that I went to her as quick as I could and told her I wished she wouldent. That our little boys was extry moddest about having outsiders see them in their night gowns and it would shaim and mortify them to see a strange lady a entering their bed room.

She had begun to say "Good gracious," and was agoing jest the same when she saw Mame alooking at her. I guess there was a look in Mame's eye that made her suddenly change her mind because she dident make no more attempts to permeate the sanctitty of their room.

By and by Mr. Spinney come to me and says, "If Ellen Hennersy gives me permission to put my arm round her waste would you do it, if you was me?"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Course," says I, not thinking she would give the permission.

"Can I put my arm round your waste, Miss Hennersy?" he says.

"What? my blue one? Sure you can." And then he made for me, but I got behind Jim. Him and her had fixed up the joak to fool me.

I noticed he kept his eye on the dress all the evening. He has always said Ellen has got perfeck taste in dress. I spose he thought it was like a proffernation for anybody else to wear it.

We couldent carm the compenny down enough to eat refreshments for a long time. We jest didn't darst to take a tray or a pile of Mrs. Sawyer's fancy plaits into sech a tumulturous crowd. Jim and Mr. Spinney had to nock on the table several times befoar they could make themselves heard and for them to set down. They all et harty of the refreshments and at one time I was

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

kind of afraid there woudent be none left for the boys. I wassent going to take none myself but Mr. Spinney made me by saying he woudent if I dident. He had earned his, sure.

Just then the women begun to explain O you darling, O the precious lamb of earth (Jim says he thogt they meant him) and made for the entry door. For what was standing there, his curly head all towsled and his pretty eyes ablinking and looking round in wonder at the goings on but our baby. Then there was a scuffle and a scramble on the stairs and in the entry and all the other boys appeared on the scean jest as they had got out of bed pertending they had come to capcher Baby but in reality to witness the festivertys in person and claim their share of the treat. Mame was for driving them all off again but when she see how poplar they was and how bent the men folks was on feeding them up she let them set round the kitchen table and the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

men waited on them and I dont know which made the most noise.

I aint seen Mrs. Tortrum sence and I would jest as lives not come in contack with her till this sudden eppysode had faded from her mind.

Old Mrs. Peterson was a dear old lady and because she was kind of deef she didnt take much part in the conversation only once in a while. But she set and smiled and seamed glad to see othars having a good time. She is almost 86 and is very gentle and composed. During refreshments a woman near her was telling about being tormented with rats in her house that she paid a high rent for, and the old lady showed she heard about all that was said. Then another woman mentioned her having canvassers come to the door quite frequent, more frequent, she added, than was sometimes desired. "What do you do, Mrs. Peterson," she says, "to get rid of them?"

The dear old saint, not knowing the sub-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ject of conversation had been changed, replied with her soft voice and gentle smile, "I alwers give em rough on rats. I don't find anything else so satisfacterry."

Mr. Spinney set down to the peannar and played and sang and ever, boddie joined in. It was morning when the party went away and a gay crowd it was. Jim says, "Look out, or folks will think that wan't water we pored out of the bottle." His meaning was us using minnerell water. It don't seam temperet to be poring it from a bottle because it seams as if it would lead to something werse. But we are using it because there is said to be animel substantis in the fasset water. Mrs. Hennersy wont drink it on friday no more.

When they had all gone and we was so happy because it had passed off so fine Jim says, "Yes, and Lyddy Rogers says she's going to send a peice about it to the Chick-tooset Arrow. And she's going to set it

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

out in great stile. We'll all see it Friday night."

Mame could jest gasp out "Oh!" in extattick tones, for this was the crowning point of her zeenith.

"But," continued Jim, "I hope you don't forget we've got to go slow on butter for a month and thare mussent be a speck of suger brought in here till then, and we got to give up having the setting-room pa-pered."

"Huh!" says Mame; "who cares anything about suger and butter! I don't care if I never see eather agane. Our party has been the most splendid ever!"

But she had jest been having oyster stew and ice-cream, and I guess she felt ruther differant nex day. You can't think what hungar is on a full stomick. That is why fasting and arms deeds goes together. You've got to fast in ordar to pitty the poor, and even then it don't last long. To pitty

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

the poor like they deserve to be pittyed you
have got to be poor yourself. And then
you ain't got nothing to give em. It's a
puzzle all round.

I tried not to think when we was feasting
and singing that only a little ways off there
was people going to bed suparless.

So no more at pressant from

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XV

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I hope you wan't kep awake las night by the celebration by the college boys on the Hill. Lyddy Rogers of Chictooseet has jest ben in and she was laughing about them taking Mr. Mandell's Sign, Interior Dec-kyrator and putting it over the caterer's door next to it.

Lyddy is one of the Chictooseet ladies that was here to the party. We wouldn't have known she was in town if she hadn't met Jim and Mame on the street the Sunday before. They didn't know her because she looked so high-toned, but she stopped them and says to Jim, "Aint I seen this face before?"

"I shouldn't wonder," he says, "I've wore it quite a spell."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"It's the face of a little boy that used to be awfull kind to his mother," she says aholding out her hand, "it aint changed a bit!"

"Neither has the little boy—inside," says Mame, and then they all had a good laugh, for they knew then it was Lyddy.

When Mame told her she didn't know her on account of her looking so fine, Lyddy says, "Law! It's nothing but this new street suit. Any woman would look fine in it. You know it takes 9 tailers to make a man but one tailer can make a woman."

Then Lyddy had a lot of questions to ask about the fambly and promised to come and see us, so here she come this morning and we had a lovely talk over old times. To be sure she was here to the party but that wan't like seeing us alone. We see that she was properous and she told us all about the business she'd took up.

There's so many new and curious ways

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

for women to earn their living now-days that we aint hardly ever surprised at anything in that line. There's them that packs trunks for them that's too lazy to do it for themselves going on a journey, them that amuse inverlids ect; but the funniest of all, it 'pears to me, is Lyddy Rogers making a lot of money jest by taking people down. We always knew Lyddy could do it and did do it but you would have supposed that with sech a habit as that she'd be apt to lose by it instead of gaining.

It all come about accidental, same as so many great discoveries has ben made in times past. Histerry is jest reeking with them, same as Galilee O. inventing clocks with faces jest by watching the osculations of the shandylear in the meeting-house.

A freind of hers heard her use her sharp tongue once (once in particular, I mean), and she laughed and says, "I'll give you 5\$, Lyd, if you come over to my house

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

and give my sister-in-law a whack like that. I fairly aik to do it but I aint going to make trouble for Fred. You're out of the family and you could do it all right."

"Going to be home to-morrow night?" says Lyddy, quick like.

"Yes," says her freind; why?"

"Are you sure you've got the 5\$?"

"Sure I have. You don't mean—"

"No matter what I mean. Jest have her there. That's all."

Neither one has ever told jest what occurred but Marietta (that's the freind) laughs whenever the subject is mentioned and I guess she doubled her fee because nex morning Lyddy marched into Seth Limpet's, the undertaker's, and hove a ten dollar bill on the counter asaying, "Here's ten more, Seth; I guess we're creeping along."

"Now, Lyddy," begun Mr. Limpet, "if it aint puffickly convenient jest now—"

"You take that money, Seth Limpet,"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

says she, "and say nothing. I don't know when I'll have any more to give you, but I know I will some time. I'd die if I thought I couldn't and dying's a lugsury I can't afford!"

It was towards her father's funeral expenses. He'd ben a pairalettic for thirty odd years and she'd took care of him and supported him all that time. Before his own money was all us .l up (and he'd had quite a pile) he used to say, "Save enough to bury me, Lyddy; don't forget that," especially when she bought some little lug-sury that he thought he could do without.

But Lyddy, though she'd say "Yes, Father," very dutiful, never skimped him in anything.

She was put to it to know what to do when she'd got to use the money in the strong-box. It was what he'd saved up all his life when he was aworking and when he got bed-ridden he liked to finger it and Count it ovar. But she mannidged to get

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

aholt of some counterfeit money of the same
diggrees and put it in its place. He used
to love to handle it ovar and ovar and he
would say, "That's the very 2-dollar bill me
and your mother dident use going to con-
ference one year. We talked it ovar and
settled down we'd ruther add it up to what
we was saving for you when we was gone.
I know it by the little peice that's gone
offer the corner" (Lyddy had saw to that).
"Then this old five-dollar one that's so dirty
& Crumped up" (poor Lyd had squshed it
up and rubbed it round on the barn floar
so's to copy after the one she had to give
the grocar), that one's the summer me and
her sold all the strawberrys we picked in
room of having them picked for suppar
most evry night. Land! we had enough
othar things, and she says, "the baby'll find
that handy sometime." And so he'd go on,
smoothing out the bills, his thin old hands
ashaking, and making kind of sandwiches
with the paper money and the cents and all

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

sech capers, & he'd go off to sleep with the strong-box in his hands.

Some folks suffer an awful sight through their partickler virtews being, like Lyddy, put so she couldent practice her besetting virtew. That with her was being honest and alwers telling the truth, no matter what happened. It was awfull hard against her nater to keep up a bluff like this while some folks I know would have a reglar pickanick adoing it. She told us afterwards that the words "Pa, I ben afooling yer," was right on the surfiss for years and she'd had a terrible struggle to keep 'em back. One day after all them years she couldent stand it no longer and she felt 'em acoming out at last, "Pa, I ben afooling yer!" says the words ('twant her at all, she says) as she was agoing into his bedroom. But he didnt hear them and he nevar heard nothing else in this world.

The spewrious money was alaying in nice little piles on the bed-quilt and on two of

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

them laid a hand that had stopped its trembling and was still.

She picked out for him the most costly casket there was when she didn't have but 75 cents to her name. No one darsted to offer to help her but one woman told her she'd ought to be more modderit and not burden herself with quite sech a large debt.

"The debt'll be paid," she says; "I know there's a Gawd."

The docter told her it would be useless to try to do any hard work on account of the serious ailments she'd contracted (contracted!) so she couldn't do no more tailoring nor nursing, things she understood so thorough. So she'd ben jes puttering along earning a quarter here and fifty cents there till she struck this new business.

Well, it got round about her taking down Antoinette Henbury and all to once she come to be awful poplar in the towns round there and finally as fur off as Boston (there's lots of former Chictooseters lives in Bos-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ton). Once somebody told her that she'd always ought to look out for the main chance, and she says, "There aint no Maine chance, or why would I come to Massachusetts?"

She makes a lot of sech talk but I know she wouldn't marry the best man ever was. When the preacher'd ben talking about there not being in Heaven any marridge or giving in marridge she says that as fur as it concerned her there wouldn't be a great sight of difference between this world and the next!

Mr. Spinney says that if her business wasn't a private one so she advertises it best by keeping still about it it would best be expressed on her card as "Reducer of Tyrants."

In a good many famblies there's a tyrant that is worse than Nerow, or any of them histerry tyrants because you can't get quit of them. Sometimes it's the father. It used to be the father up to Squire Henbury's

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

and I can see poor little Mrs. Henbury now, tremling all over when he hollered at her and she hadn't done a thing. Jest as often it's the woman of the house and the poor hen-pecked husband dreads nothing so much as his own fireside where he hadn't ought to have nothin but loving words and newspapers and carpet slippers. Worse than all he's an objeck of ridicule, which the down-trod woman never is. Then again p'raps it's a young one that has ben give in to so much they keep the whole household in an uproar and there aint no peace for anybody.

Well, Lyddy says it has always made her blood sizzle to see how the rest of the fam-bly would stand it and think they have got to stand it.

"They have got to stand it," I says, remembering how it used to be at the Squire's and mentioning some of the scenes to her.

"I wish I'd ben there," she says with a glint in her eye.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

She was staying a few days at Andrew Perkins's once and that Luhannah Perkins that want but 3 years old was jest about driving them crazy. She had got her stomach out of kilter eating vittles she haddn't ought to and then had to be humored because she was sickly. They thought they had to give in to her because she straightened herself out and yelled like all possessed if they didn't. Andrew had got to having nervous headaiks that implicated his work and things was in pretty bad shaip when Lyddy went there. They didn't think it was right to chastise her but Lyddy has got the old-fashioned belief in the laying on of hands.

She made Mrs. Perkins go off on a visit (nobody else could have done it so that was skilled labor) and she soon fixed it so that Andrew wan't afraid to say "no" for fear of a rumpus. He talks now about the time when he used to have them terrible headaiks and Luhannah is wiping dishes for her

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

mother at the tender age of 4, and doing light chores besides. Mrs. Perkins give Lyddy a pretty good sum on the sly, and Andrew passed out about the same amount on another sly, but she earned every single cent of it. She admits sech things take it out of her.

Soon afterwards she was invited to the Lanes'. Jake Lane hadn't ben married a year yet and that pretty little wife of his that made you think of a bright pretty bird when she went there to live looks like she'd ben drawed through 7 cities and a not-hole. It's Jake's mother, a leading membar of the church that's done it. She jest worships Jake and it stands to reason it would hurt her feelings to see him all wrapped up in somebody else, but she hadn't ought to take it all out on little Elviny. If old Mrs. Lane had lived seperet it would have ben better, but live seperet she wouldn't. She was going to live alng of her boy same as she had always done. Well, she prose-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

cuted poor Elviny in a hundred little ways. She wouldn't let her do no work and then jawed her because she had to do it all; and she twitted her about her folks, and that jest about broke the poor little thing's heart. She was jest puning and fading away when Jake asked Lyddy there for a visit. Her strenth laid in the fack that she wan't afraid of anybody and she didn't care a tunket what they said to her. She says she was born with an armer on.

She begun to twit Mrs. Lane about her folks right before Elviny and to praise up Elviny's folks. Then she asked her (Elviny) if she hadn't ever felt no vane regrets after that rich widower that offered himself to her; and said she could now be living in stile if she took him with a hired man, and an otto and all the lugsuries of the season. Then she introduced Jake to put the house in Elviny's name and give her a blowing up for being so meaching and letting Jake's mother make it so hard for him. She knew

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

how far to go in every direction. Elviny mustn't get up too much spunk and her mother-in-law mustn't be let to feel as if she wan't nothing any more to her boy. All them deliket points was fully considered and by the end of 2 months she'd about, as she said, "established the ballance of power." Mrs. Lane has jest writ her how proud she is of Elviny's sponge cake, and that it ackchelly goes ahead of hers though she learnt her to make it by her rule. And it will be into a very peacefull and loving household that any little stranger will come somewheres along the last of the winter or early spring. Between them all she says she got 45\$ besides her board.

She lets domestic sufferers know of her business on the quiet and she has got more orders than she can fill.

She makes a speciallity of women that puts on airs and brags about their close and their sassiety doings when they go out to lunchings and dinners. The woman of the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

house can't take down company, but Lyddy, who is also company can do it and she does. When they brag she brags, too, and goes them one better. Sometimes she suddenly changes the convasation, as if she was sick and tired of hearing of their doings and havings. That is awful cutting, though it's what they've ben doing themselves, and most probbly they hate her for it. She says the lady of the house is supposed to make it up to her.

She showed us her little book where she has got 6 dinners and 7 lunchings engaged. One paytron says she had stood the sarcasms of a woman she had to invite to her house for her husband's business reasons till she was sometimes jes ready to throw the coffee-pot at her; and the slick way Lyddy answered her back done the whole tablefull good, and they all said they wouldn't of missed it for anything.

So no more at pressent.

Your true freind, Jennie Allen.

XVI

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

We had a beautiful time Sunday afternoon in the park. If it had happened before Jamesy was called home it would of ben the happiest day of all my life. When Bub and Gussy and me was about ready to start out Mr. Spinney happened to come down stairs and was awful surprised we was going to the park.

"Why!" he says; "my steps is bent in the same derection and if agreeable to all, the same fleet charriot shall convey us thither." And he took each of the boys by the ear and pulled them out the door. The weather was lovely. All nacher seamed to smile and it would of been a poor mizzable set of creachers that woudent smile back. Praps it was smiling in derision. We are a funny lot. any way you take us. But any-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

way it smiled. The little boys was in sech sperrits they couldent hardly contain themselves. Mr. Spinney said he didn't know whether it was because they was too large or too small. They are growing fast in both lattytude and longytude and Mr. Spinney inquired as he looked admiring at the baby, if the problem of the descending celestial Wardrobe didnt grow more difficult as time wore on. "Yes," I says, "but I've been able to cope with it so fur and I ain't worrying about the futur. Bub will be old enough to sell papers between schools and buy first-hand trousers for himself by the time the baby will be ready for a small section of Jim's. I always notice the great Teacher don't send problems we can't work out if we try hard enough."

When we got into the car Mr. Spinney says to Bub, "Do you still hold the contrack for removing pealings from public places? because if you do there's one now for you to attend to."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

“Where?” says Bub, looking around, “I don’t see it.”

“Neither do I. It’s the pealing of the bells.” Everybody in the car laughed, even a disagreeable looking woman in the corner that hadent looked caperble of sech a thing. What he says dont sound funny wrote down but its the quick, cute, unresistible way he speaks em. I believe he could read a chapter of Jerry Myer so you would bust right out alaughing. He don’t do it to show off, eather. He jest can’t help it. We was lucky enough to have sech good compenny on our trip but I thought how much happyer he would be if Ellen was along. When I said so to him and told him I wisht she was with us he sobered right down and didnt make no reply. My heart aiked fcr him.

When we got to the park it was all so beautiful I cried out, “Oh, aint it jest like Paradise!”

“Look here!” says Bub; “let’s make be-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

leave it *is* Paradise and you two *is* Adam and Eve and me and Gus *is* Cain and Able."

That pleased Mr. Spinney but he reminded him that Cain and Able hadn't never been in Paradise.

"Then how could it have been Paradise to them?" I says. "Eve must of been happyer after she had her boys than she was befoar—that is till Cain's crime. She couldent of had any regrets for Paradise before that happened." Mr. Spinney says, "I never thought of it before but who could they trace Cain's cussedness back to? Adam couldent say to his wife, "He got it from your side of the house," and vicy vercer. It was the only case where a bad man's actions couldent be hove off onto some ancestor on the other side."

Well, we walked along, the boys capering around, punching each other for fun and dodging and laughing. When we come to a lovely grove Mr. Spinney motioned to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

a little rustic seat asaying, "Let's set down here together—Eve."

"There's some longer ones," I says, "where you can have more room. Why not take one of them?"

"They don't afford jest the same view." I didnt see no diffrance in the view but I set down on the one he seleckted.

"Besides," he added, "it aint room I'm athinking of. There's other things besides room in this world."

"Yes, there's board. That has to be thought of."

"Miss Allen," he says, in a tone of dispare, "a continoous and exclusive rappar environment has took all sentiment out of your soul. It is well I have brought you for one breef hour to a rapparless world. Look around you! behold the vast blue fir-nament above you! clouds there, if you will, but no rappars. The trees in all their Ver-during beauty stands around us innocent of rappars. The little birds soaring skyward

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

have never heard of a rappar in all their happy little lives. Their pretty songs convey no note of rappars and the worm within their bills when it turns as we are told it does at rare intervals, sees not a rappar in all the sky or landerscrape. The sward beneath your feet is gemmed with flowers but not with wrappers. Look down as closely as you will you cannot decern the tiniest tender shoot of a budding rappar abusting through the brown mould. With the splendid autumn air, we breathe in no rappars. You are now in a world in which there is no rappars, nor giving in rappars and 'twas I that brought you here!"

His voice was getting louder and louder and he made all Kinds of jesters, pointing around. I was awful scared because I thought his intellecks was unhinged from worry about his mother and the way Ellen was treating him. I tried to carm him down by telling him she had asked me only the day before how he was getting along.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I hadent told him before for fear of giving him too much encouridgement. But now, says I, anything to soothe and moderate him down. Then he laughed and inquired if I hadent been acquainted with Edward J. Spinney long enough to know when he was fooling. "But honest, Jen," says he, "Don't you get everlasting sick of them rappars?"

"Why!" I says, not knowing yet, what to make of him. "I love the work. Most of all because I can do 'em to home and be with my folks all the time. But rappars themselves is clean and honest."

"But not uplifting."

"That's what they are more than anything else," I cried;—"anyway to me. When I set sewing on them the most beautiful thoughts comes to me—thoughts about mother and Jamesy and heaven—thoughts about how I can do something to help people the very most I can, even if its nothin more than tying a woman's shoe in the streat that is too fat to get down. I aint

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

got much money to give away. I turn everything right into the fambly now. But it aint what you give. It's what you've got left after you give that tells the story."

"If you happened to have the change about you," he says, "you would give away horspittles and liberrys every day like any other fillanthropist, woudent you?"

"Yes," I says, "with considderable leaning towards horspittles. It looks sometimes like people read too much. They aint satisfied without they are holding a book or magazeen in their hands all the time. I should think their minds would be so crammed with other folks thoughts there woudent be no room for any of their own. I wonder what we would be like if we wasent hampered by sentuaries of second-hand thoughts and opinions. Childern has too many ideas foarced into them and they fill up the spaces where their own ideas is trying to take root. We aint got no right to do that. Every one has got a right to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

their brain room same as they have to their house-room. If we fill it up with our own notions we had ought to pay rent. And the rent ought to be so high almost nobody could afford to pay it. But I was going to say if I could ever give away liberrys (and I dont quite see my way to it at the pressant writing) I would fill them with nice sencale books—not them that would devilate the mind nor even sillify it. The sillification of a human mind produced by light reading in exsess is almost as bad as its Devilation."

"Do you ever think of people as being like books?" says Mr. Spinney.

"Many's the time. And even there there's too much reading. Sasiety people see and read too many human books and don't get the chanst to learn or love anyone of them thorough. Some has beautiful bindings but aint nothing but blank books. Some (they are novvels) is nothing but lover's quarrels clear through."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Them is scrap books," he says gravely.

"I often think in church we folks is a liberry," I says. "There's books we've never opened—them is uttar strangers. There's books we've read a little in hear and there—them is slight acquaintances. Then there's books we've read through. I've read you through, and Ellen and Miss Musgrove and Mr. Oglevie. As for Sis and the boys I've helped write them, though I suppose I had no business to. All of these books I like and I can recommend."

"Don't you think," says Mr. Spinney, "that I would sillify the mind?"

"If I was asked to recommend just one volumn in this libery of a world I would say, "Better take E. J. Spinney. There's life and fun and strenth and goodness in it. I'm a good deal better from reading of it and I know you'll be."

"Jen," he says, "if there wan't a heaven already we'd have to have one made for your accommodation."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I'm used to his jokes so I dident mind.
"But tell me," he says; "is Heaven so
very reel to you?"

"Jest as reel as Australy or even Paw-
tucket or any place I've heard tell of but
never seen. I couldn't have stood it when
Jamesy was called home if it wan't that way.
When the minister was making the remarks
to the funerell I kept asaying to myself,
'He's with Mother! he's with Mother! he's
with Mother!' and I pictured out jest how
she looked when she took him in her arms.
She'd see quick enough he was all Shattuck.
I often think that when I'm passing out
I dont want no sad faces round, but I wish
there would be some one who would sing
out loud and bright and hearty, "Nex sta-
tion, Heaven!" And I don't know of any-
body else that could say it the way I mean
but you. It sounds jest like you. Of
course nobody in the fambly could say it.
They would be too low-sperrited."

He turned quick and looked down at me.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"And do you think I could do it, Jennie? Don't you think I would be low-sperrited too?" Then he laughed and said, "I'll do it Jen, and there's my hand on it. I'd like to do better than that and go with you —anyway as far as the junction where our ways divide."

As if I could leave him at the junction. While we was talking the sun had begun to set and now the whole sky in the west was a blaze of Glory. It seamed so much like the Heaven we had been talking about (it was all crimsen and perple and gold) and my thoughts had been so fur away from earth as I set there that it woudent have seamed so very strange if I had caught a sight of Jamesey's roagish face between the bright bars or Mother's patient one asmil-ing at me. Everything around us was still. He had forgot to let go of my hand and praps he was making beleave I was Ellen because it was pretty dark. For my part I made beleave I was Ellen, too. After

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

a long time, a beautiful time, I says, "I wish Ellen was here instead of me."

He dropped my hand, reminded that it wan't hers. "Would you like to see Ellen Hennersy and me married, Jennie?" he says.

I thought a minnit so I could be sure I was saying it truthful and then I says "Yes, more than anything else in this world."

"Come," he says, as he riz up slowly; "let's go home."

I had forgot about the little boys. We looked around but they was nowheres to be seen.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XVII

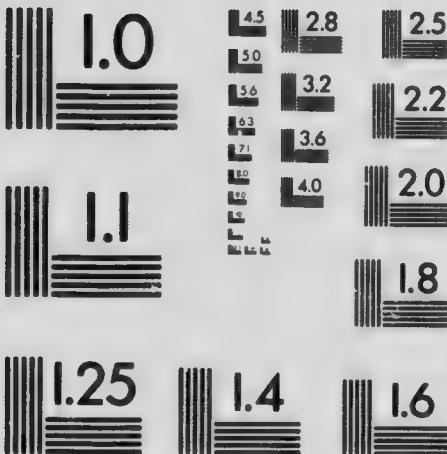
Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I thank you kindly for your nice letter. I had rather have one of your letters than a pressant. You say I left off too sudden about our trip to the park. I dident have no more paper. Now I have got me a nice new tablet that is jest fine, the lines is all so distinck. And along these lines I can say our coming home was the best of all. The boys wanted to walk and what did we all do but walk. It was a lovely evening and we dident any of us get tuckered out. The plannet Juniper was as bright as a butten. The stars from a child has always looked to me like little brass buttens and it is verry hard to considdar they are inhabitted. Mr. Spinney said that Juniper was 12 times the size of the earth and only resolves with half of its ferocity. But I



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

dont take much interest in sech things and it is hard for me to remember about them. It is wonderful how much he knows on every subjeck there is. Sometimes it seams as if his head must bust.

I forgot to say that where the little boys was when we couldent find them, they was fighting with another little boy they had picked up acquaintance with. It was all over and Bub had washed his face at the founten when we found them. We woudent have known nothing about it only there was a streak of blood around his nose so we asked who he had been fighting with. "How did you know about it?" he inquired.

"My boy," says Mr. Spinney, "blood will tell." Then I told him how him getting hurt was a punishment for fighting on the Sabbath day and I knew he would never dair to do sech a thing again.

"Huh!" says Bub; "when a feller comes up and pulls your hair how can you stop to think what day of the week it is?"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Mr. Spinney talked beautiful all the way home, about the stars and the grandure of the night and your soul. He recited off some poetry, that he had made up himself and said a serten good unselfish little woman had inspired it. I can't see what Ellen is thinking off. Any one can't imagine Dinny Caffretty writing poetry. The buildings was all black against the sky and Mr. Spinney pointed out a tall pole that appeared to be near a church spire and said it was a wireless telegraft pole. "So's the spire, too," says Gussy. "That's from where our messages goes up to Heaven!" Wasn't that a pretty thought of Gussy's?

This afternoon Gussy was looking out of the back winder when all to once he yelled to Bub, "Look! there's our park man." We run to the winder jest in time to see a tall dark complected misterious man shaking his finger warningly at Gussy with black whiskers that disappeared round the corner. Of course we asked the boys then who their

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

park man was and they told us he was the one that seperated Bub when he was fighting and helped him to wash up and carm down afterwoods. Then when they was unwrapping their Lunching he come round again and set down with them. All they had was 2 biskets and 2 apples but Bub says, "Gus, let's give him 1 bisket and 1 apple and we can harve the other for us. He's biggar than us and requiers more food." They done so and they all et together. He says "Seems to me this is kind of dry fodder for you," and Gussy says, "Yes, our sandwiches ain't got butter or anything between them because we've had a party."

"A party!" he says; "and was it a pretty good party?"

The best that ever was in this world, they said; and then they told him all about it and how we come to have it. "He was holding Gus on one knee" says Bub, "and me on the other and we both talked so fast

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

he says, "There, there! one to a time please." And he asked us a lot of questions about where we'd put Mrs. Sawyer's silver and all the other things and he laughed and laughed when we told him we didn't sleep very comfortable on account of some of it being between all the mattresses and some of it packed in the oven nights and about me berrying the littlest spoons in the rubber plant pot and making believe I was Captain Kid berrying my traysure. And he wanted to know if we used a basement door and if the back porch door was locked up nights."

That was enough for Mame. She is sure the man is a burglar. It really does look so myself but I don't let on to her that I think the man is dangerous. We have been hard at work shifting the valyables round into new places. Mrs. Sawyer said her silver wasn't solid but you would think so to heft it. It don't seem as if there was a holler peice among it.

Jim made kind of a trap once to catch

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

any person that tryed to get in the back door and we are going to make him set it for to-night. It is made of iron with a spring and catches your foot when you try to get in and steal. Then Mame says we have got to take turns setting up watching. I choose the first harf because Jim is so tired out after his day's work; and I am going to try to keep awake the whole night and not have to be releaved by anybody else. I am afraid the burglery will be my fault because I had ought to kept the boys with me in the park. I don't know why I dident. I never let them out of my sight before when they was with me.

Later.

Jim has got home and we have told him all about the burgler. He looked pretty serious and lost no time in setting the trap. He wanted to have the first watch but I told him the eppysode was more likely to come the latter part of the night and he had better get in some sleep before it come

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

off. He asked if the man was a big, burley feller. We said he was big but we wan't so sure about the burley part.

"I'm sorry," he says; "because burglers is allwers burley. It says so in the papers the nex morning. If you could declare he was burley that would prove what he was up to."

"We don't need no more proof," says Mame. "He wormed all that inflamation out of the children, and besides, what did he shake his finger at Gussy for? There's another thing I'm sure of and that is them black whiskers is false and is part of his disguisement. Nobody ever wore sech as them for any good purpose. Are you sure, Jim, dear, the trap is in good working condition?"

"Don't you be alarmed about that," Jim says. "If we catch a miscrit in that trap to-night, as I hope to do, I'll make my fortune out of a paytent on it."

I do hope even for the burgler's sake that

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

he wont come to-night. It would be terrible for anyone to be caught in that wicked trap. I have got harf a mind to go down when the others is asleep and take it away. I would for sure if I reely thought the burgler was coming. The reason I think he aint is because we all expect him. Things like that is allwers serprises.

I will close now as the dark cloud of danger and dread hovers over our roof threttening with awful voice to engulf us in its deepening waters. We haven told Mandy nor the children a thing about it.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XVIII

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I am going to tell you all about last night. After the others had gone to bed, I set down with my sewing. It wan't long before Mr. Spinney come in and asked if there was sickness on account of there being a light at that late hour. I says "No," and give a full account of our alarming situation. Then he remarked if there was going to be ructions he wanted to be in it. He said he was going to read the evening paper and if I had no objexions he would set and keep me company a spell. He read out loud for a while and then when he see the work drop from my hands and me nodding he says, "Poor little tired girl!" and took my work away and made me get into the morris chair. I was jest drowzing off

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

when I was dimfully conscious that he was letting down the chair back to make me more comferable and putting a cushion under my head. I dropped off to sleep, thinking how beautiful it was to have him taking care of me like this and keeping guard over us all, and I didnt know nothing more till I was aroused by a howl of anguish from below, follerred by terrible yells and then howl upon howl. I was springing up when Mr. Spinney pushed me back into the chair and held me there saying, "Stay where you are! Quick! Promise me!" I had to promise and then—I might as well tell you the whole of it—then he bent down and kissed me, and was off down the stairs. I saw the glint of a revolver in his hand as he run off, but I was so dazed by his kiss I couldent think of anything else. Praps I woudent ever see him again alive but I'd had that kiss. I thought that is where the past is better than the future. You've got your past, nothing can

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

take it away, but sometimes you dont dare to hope anything for the future I knew what that kiss meant. He thought he might be going to his death and in that way he bid good-by to all his friends, most of all, perhaps, to his Mother. Well, she shoudent miss him too much while I lived. I vowed that then and there. By this time all the fambly was up and flying round. The hol-lering down stairs had stopped, moderating down to a few groans at the finish and now all was still. Jim had gone down though Mame had held on to him and beged him to stay with her. That silance was terrible. We didnt know what it meant. Mame was white and wild and Mandy was shaking like an asking leaf. I went to the head of the stairs and lissened. Not a sound. I opened the door to go down and I saw 3 men coming slowly up. The burgler was in the middle, still groaning and mutter-ing and the 2 other men was on both sides of him, helping him tenderly along. They

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

brought him right into the room and dispossited him carefully into the morris chair, and as he leaned back he mumbled, "Great mistake of mine, this trying to be benevolent," follerred by a groan that made your blood run cold. As soon as the little boys caught sight of his black-whiskered face they rushed straight into his arms. He cuddled them down and stroked Gussy's curls as we took off his shoe and stocking. They asked me how the anarchy bottle happened to be so handy undar the couch along with old linen for bandages but they didnt wait for no answer, they was so excited. Nobody noticed that the revolver was alaying right on the table in reach of the burgler and I took it and hid it away. Mr. Spinney brought a tub of warm water for his foot and while he was bathing it Jim said he'd bring up "the hamper." He looked awful sheepish when he come back and set the big stilish-looking basket beside his chair. The burgler was laying back, very white,

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

with his eyes closed, but his arms was still close about the boys. Jim quietly took a card offen the basket handle and passed it round for us to read. It said,

"For the 2 little chaps that shared all they had with

A Stranger."

For a while no one spoke. Then Jim says, "What be we agoing to say to this gentleman?" Another silance while Mame tried to keep from crying. Finally she put out her hand to him. "I'm their mother," she says. "Can you forgive us?" He took her hand and held it a moment, then said with a laugh that showed a handsome row of white teeth between the black whiskers, "Let's have another party, and I will be the entertainer." He reached down and opened the basket. "Oh!!!" was all the children could say. There was the most beautiful of all kinds of toys and books. Best of all to the boys was the train of cars with its long track. Their mother let them

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

stay up enough longer to see it wound up and going once, then they scampered off to bed, after they had given the burgler a fectionated good-night kiss.

After they had gone Jim says to the burgler (he wan't a burgler at all but we didn't know what else to call him then) Jim says to him, "I ain't much for talking, but I guess you must know how we feel about this. If you are laid up with your foot you aint got to worry about nurse's bills nor doctor's bills—I can tell you that. But the rest of it I cant tell you. It's too deep down." Then Mame piped up. "We want you to stay here till your foot is well," she says, "if it takes a year. If you lose work by it we'll do what we can to make it right."

"While you are going without butter and eggs and sugar? How are you going to manage it?"

"Oh! that's only till the month is out. We can manage it all right," and him and

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Mame exchanged a knowing look. They had some money laid by for a rainy day, and this was a flood.

The burglar asked if he was to share the boys' bed like the Tortrum lad but Jim told him he was in no condition that night to perform the climbing stunt that required, so he was going to sleep in state on the parlor sofya.

Mame asked if his folks wouldn't worry about him; and his face was awful sad when he says, "I aint got any folks to worry about me; I haven't a tie in the world."

"Then Jim will lend you one of his," cries Mandy.

"I'll lend you all of mine," puts in Jim.

You'd have thought the burgler would of ben kind of affected by this, because it was plain to see what Jim meant, which was he was welcome to what we could all do for his comfort; but he didn't seem to pay any attention to it, and Mr. Spinney

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

thought it was because he was too hardened. But I told him it was on account of him not being used to kindness so he didn't know it when it come. "He's going to know it now, though," I says. "He has had some awful sorrer and we're all going to try to lighten it while he's here. And we are going to depend to a great excess on you," I added, "for nobody can make folks forget their troubles like you can."

"I guess," he makes answer in a kind of a bitter tone, "that with 7 or 8 on the job of cheering him up there wont be no need of me joining the crowd."

I looked at him in astonishment. I hadn't ever heard him speak like that before, but I set it down to him having underwent sech a terrible nervable strain.

The burgler is close-mouthed and reserved and don't ask for sympathy, but we are going to be freindly without him asking us. He is a man of few words. When Jim asked him when and what we should

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

call him in the morning he said, "Eight o'clock and Jason."

So we all call him Jason. He said today if he give a sir name it wouldn't be the right one and he preferred not to lie to us. Mame says that shows he is fleeing from justice but as long as he is in our house we will proteck him, especially as he is probably innocent of the crime he has committed. He has jest set round all day very quiet with his foot in a chair and not showing much annimation excep when the boys is round. They hang round him all the time and don't seem to be a bit afraid of him same as the rest of us is desposed to be. They pull his whiskers so hard without pulling them off that Mame gives in that they must be indigernous after all.

I have kep from telling you so fur about something that has afflicted me unpleas-
antly. I know you will think I am foolish
but it is a releaf to tell it to some one.

I have rassled with it in prayer but

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

there's times when we need to confess things to folks. I know you wont never believe any one could be so wicked, but last night I wisht I had died—me, Jennie Allen, that has got folks and health and a home, and the world so full of things to be done—I wisht I had died.

I told you about him putting his provisional gr. d-by on my lips because they was the only ones there when he went to face death and danger in the back Porch. I can't begin to tell you the joy that come with it and how everything that happened afterwoods seemed like a dream. It was because that kiss was so great to me that all the rest dwindled down to almost nothing in comparison. It was like a Last Sacrament, it was so sollem and full of meaning, and I longed to be aloan so I could live it all over agane. I nevver was so happy in all my life before. And can't ever be so happy agane.

After all the rest had left the setting-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

room he came to me and said, "Jen, what I done before I rushed down stairs to-night was on account of me being so excited at the racket I didn't know what I was adoing. I had no right to do sech a thing and I hope you'll forget it."

Forget it! As if I ever could! As if the whole aspeck of the world hadent changed while he was uttaring them words. That was the time I wisht I had died—before he spoke. So the past can be took away from you after all,—when the meaning of it has been took away. Events ain't anything. It's their meaning that counts.

I couldent sleep; but after I had prayed the terrible pain settled down into a stiddy aik. Praps even the aik will pass away if I don't cuddle it and make of it too much. I ain't ever going to speak of it agane. It ain't sense. Jason is trying to bind up his foot alone and is making a poor jorb of it. So I must go and help him.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XIX

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I got an awful scare about Ellen Hennersy. Last night I was down town to take home some work and on my way back I saw her coming out of a drug store with a bottle in her hand. Soon as she ketched sight of me she looked awful guilty and hid it under her cape. I woudent of thought nothing of it if she haddent looked so kind of desperate. I hurried and caught up with her; and as we walked along I says, trying to be carm, "Been buying medicin?" She had told me she dident want to live no longer but I never thought it would come to this.

"No, it aint medicine exackly," she says, and begun to talk about something else. When we reached home I coaxed her to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

come into my room. I told her how she mussent ever take no drugs without the doctor's orders and even then they must be taken with a grain of salt. "But I told you long ago that you had ought to see a doctor."

"A doctor couldent do me no good, Jen."

"Well, give me the bottle for I know the contents aint good for you."

"Well," she says as she handed it out, "I don't beleive I was agoing to use it anyway; but the stuff has kind of a fassination for me and I wanted to get aholt of it. It's peer ox hide of hydro, Jen."

"Peer ox hide of hydro?" I says as I took the bottle, "what for the land's sake is that?"

Ellen hung her head like I had never see her do before and she says kind of shamed like, "It's the stuff that cullers your hair that lovely yeller like the demming-straighter's that has got afowl of Dinny. I've been down to the store lots of times.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

It seemed as if I couldent keep away, because I wanted to see what it was that enticed Dinny away. I know now it's her hair because her face aint pretty, and I thought if jest a bottle of this made sech a difference in my life and Dinny's p'raps it woudent be wrong for me to use it. You know pope said beauty draws us by a single hair, and how much more if its a beautiful golden one."

"Did the pope say that?" I says.

"No, but a man named Mr. Pope."

But I got Mame to look it up in a book of cotations afterwoods and she found it was Pop , Alexander. But I never told Ellen she was wrong. One way to make yourself disagreeable is to explain to folks that they are wrong.

"Ellen Hennersy!" I exclaimed; "you that have got the softest, loveliest black hair that ever was, and a spontaneous pompeydore besides! I would begrudge a crown of reel gold that would kivver up

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

that lovely head of hair. Aint you ashamed of yourself for jest thinking of putting that foolish collering stuff on it?"

She hove a sithe that seemed to come from her very vitels, and says, "I wish every one was of your mind."

"Well, I know of one that is and that is Mr. Spinney. We've heard him say so a dozen times. He woudent look at a woman with bleached hair. He has got too much good taste."

It cost me a lot to say that—probblly because it was my duty. Inclination and duty is like two old horses we had on the farm. Inclination—I mean Fanny—would be pulling a load as cheerful as if she had picked the way out for herself; but when they added old Pepper (so named in derision because he was a low-sperited plodder) to help the team along, she balked and cut up generally, trying to go some other way. Old Pepper was hombley enough, too, to stand for duty. He didn' show his

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

living. A stranger was poking fun at him once and Jim, feeling bad to hear his old pet spoke of that way, declared he had a number of good points.

"Yes, I see 'em all," says the stranger.

Well, to go back to Ellen. When I come out with that remark that was so hard for me to say, she unhitched Fanny and pepper for me by saying, "Jen dear, it wont ever be any use to talk that up to me. I couldn't ever be anything but a freind to Ed Spinney even if he wanted me to which he probberbly don't. Any way he never comes to see us though Mother has asked him to be neighborly."

Well, it aint ever your duty to try to acheave the impossible so I hove a sithe of relief at her words.

"Maybe the wish was father to the thought," she added.

"No, no relation at all. But, Ellen, there's others—plenty of them. Now you take a little advice from me. I'm 32 and

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

you aint but 19. Why don't you be nice and sensible and let the man go that has forgot about you (she winched at this) and take up with one of the others that is simply crazy about you and more worthy of a woman's tender heart?"

"Jen," she says, "you aint ever had a beaux and as fur as beauxs is concerned, I am 32 and you aint but 19. I know a man is frequent more loving after his affections has took a vacation and I feel all the time as if Dinny was coming back to me. Me and Mother prays for it every night. She thinks the world of him same as I do."

"Then why don't you send for him to come and see you? We are recommended to use human agencies to help out our prayers and the telephone is one of the most powerful agencies known to science."

No, she said, she would never do that. "But," she says, "I'm reely sorry I passed Dinny 3 times in the street without looking at him. I wouldn't do that now."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Oh!" says I; "did you do that? I thought it was all Dinny's fault."

"So it was," she says, "but I needn't have done that. He looked as if it made him feel bad."

"I thought you didn't look at him," I says.

"Oh! do you suppose a girl has to look at a man to see him?" says Ellen.

I feel awful sorry for Ellen's mother for she suffers with Ellen. She has been a good kind freind to us all. She is an awful big woman and you can't help feeling glad there is so much of her. As I look at it there can't be too much of a woman like Mrs. Hennery, and she has got a heart big in proportion. If we didn't take may-sures to prevent she would use up a couple pounds of sugar every week inaking cookies and doughnuts for our little boys. The baby calls her Mrs. Cookey and when Gussy is lost you can most alwers find him in her kitchen having some light refresh-



7.2.1890

"I thought you didn't look at him," I says. "Oh! do you suppose a girl
has to look at a man to see him?" says Ellen

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ments. When she makes frosting for cake she never forgets to give them the dish to clean out with their spoons and she says they don't trouble her a bit.

She is first on deck in time of trouble. When Jamesy was took away and Mame was using quieting portions so much and we was afraid she would overtake a dose of morfeen, Mrs. Hennery reasoned with her and says, "What would dear little Jamesy say if he was alive to-day and saw his mother was making herself into a dope feind because he had died. Wouldn't you be ashamed?"

"Yes," says poor Mame, "and I will try and bear it."

And she never took another bit.

Other times when you're in sorrow she don't try to reason but she jest says "There, there," in sech soothing tones it is better than a sermon on resignation. You woudent beleive there could be so much meaning in "there, there," till you heard

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

her say it to you while she stroked your hair and loked pitying at you.

She is a fine singer but she sings only Irish songs that she learnt, she says, often her Man that's dead and gone three years come Micklemas. Since Ellen has been so poorly her mother aint had the heart to sing but we all used to love to hear her because she got into sech a gale of fun and frolic. She would chuck back her head, put her hands on her knees, and sing with all her might and main, laughing and keeping time by pounding her feet on the floor. Our favoryte peice is something like this:

"If all the young girls was rushes agrown,
Then all the young min would get scythes
and go mowin.

If all the young girls was salmon so lively
Then niver a young man would eat meat
on a Friday."

Then the chorus is the best of all, and sounds like:

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Ohone, and mushlackin, awhackin, ohone!
Ouge, derrigaa, Ileen Malone!"

or words to that effeck. When she comes to that part she sings all the louder and whacks a' i pounds the floor till you think it is agoing through; and you are having sech a good time you don't care if it is. In fack you are so excited you kind of wish it would, and in the last verse everybody joins in. They can't help it. Even if they have never sung before, they have got to then. I aint ever seen the man, woman or child that could set still or silant, while she sung that choruss. It puts the old Nick into you and you forget all your troubles and all you think is you've got to make all the noise there is and she does it without letting her pipe go out. She is a perfeck lady.

Poor Mr. Spinney got into kind of a scraip about that song the day after he heard it the first time. He was all carried away with it and begged her to sing it

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

again and again. Nex day he was in our part of the house and he couldent think of the words to 2 of the verses, and we couldent think of them either. He kep a trying to think of them, and to help along he sung the other verses and the chorus same as she done, whacking on his knees and pounding on the floor to keep time. He'd got as far as "If all the young girls was salmon so lively," and was singing with all his might when the door opened and there stood Ellen—with eyes ablazing and cheeks as red as fire. Handsome was no name for it, but didn't she look mad! We was all scared, I tell you. Jest think of being scared of little Ellen! She looked at Mr. Spinney and says, "You are making sport of my mother, are you?"

"No," he says kind of weak like.

"Yes!" she says, "you was setting her out."

At last he gapsed out, "I wasn't setting

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

her out, Miss Hennery, because I got the greatest respeck for your mother"—but he didn't get no further because she shut the door then, and she shut it pretty hard for Ellen Hennery.

Well, you had ought to see Mr. Spinetey's face. I suppose he would rather offend anybody else in the world than Ellen. "Good hevvens!" he says; "what can I do? I never felt so small in my life. Jest to think of her believing I would make sport of her mother espeshally after her entertaining me in that tip-top style! She'd ought to know me better than that."

After we had talked it over a spell he inquired how it would do to send the old lady a bunch of violets in the morning jest to show respeck.

"No," I says, "they wouldn't be suitable for anybody her size and shape it seems to me."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Well, then," says Jim, "how does a package of fine-cut with his card enclosed strike you?"

"Look here," put in Mr. Spinney; "You don't know how I'm feeling about this or you'd try to help me out."

We agreed finally that we would let it go for the peasant. I told him Ellen had a quick temper but she was soon over it; and such seemed to be the case, for when we saw Ellen again she had apparently forgot all about it.

But I can't help thinking that trivial incident may change their whole lives. Mr. Spinney felt bad enough about it—I know that. O why did not an angel with flaming sword stand before him that fatal night to keep him from singing the song!

Your true friend,

Jennie Allen.

XX

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I thank you for your letter. Yes, Jason has settled down with us and is one of the fambly now. We have got so used to him that we can't beleive he is a fugertive from justiss any more, though he never speaks of his past. If he has ever committed a crime I know he is repenitent for it and never calkilates to do likewise again. A nicer and quieter man round the house you couldent ask for. At first he seemed to absent-minded to help about the chores same as Mr. Spinney does when he happens to be here, and I woudent ask him for the world—he seems so kind of risticrattic. But the second day he was here in the late afternoon, Mandy says "The coal is out, Jason." "So I see," he says, with only what you

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

might call moderit interest. (He hardly ever speaks ekcep you ask him a question, and very little of that.) Then she handed him the empty hod. He looked kind of bewildered first at her, and then at the hod. Then he limped off down stairs and fetched it back full. When he endeavored to put some on the fire a lot of it run over on the floor; but no lamb could have got down and picked it up peice by peice more pashent than he done. Nex morning he asked if he could be of any serviss and Mandy set him to cleaning the lamps. He made a pretty bad mess of it, breaking two chimbleys and leaving the others worse than they was before. We didnt want to hurt his fealings by doing them over again but nex day I got ahead of him and done them myself. It aint no joke to sew evenings with the light struggling faintly and fitfully through a sooty chimbly. A row of clean lamps is an awful pretty sight to me, with the chimbleys clear and bright and shining



Nex morning he asked if he could be of any serviss and Mandy
set him to cleaning the lamps



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

as if they was soap bubbles that a breath would blow away. When I got them done he come and gazed at them with a kind of awe and says, "I never before had so much respeck for a row of lamps. I will try to acheave something like that to-morrow if you will trust them to me." I knew anybody with that sperit was bounded to succeed, and sure enough he can do better every day. Jim says the time aint far distant w en he wont have to take off the chimbley to see if the lamp is lit.

"Don't you suit you?" anxiously inquired Jason.

"I should say they did soot me," answers Jim.

Jason being tall, and sollem and misterious looking, looks sort of funny when he is polishing the silverware (that we thought he had come to steal) and he was doing it when Mrs. Sawyer come in one day to tell us she had got ba k and was ready to take it home.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

When she asked Gussy who he was and he said "Father caught him in a trap," she told him he was a naughty little boy to speak so to a lady and she couldent give him something pretty she had brought for him. Before he had time to ezplain, Mame rushed in and shook her head at him and said the gentleman was a freind of Jim's that was out of employment making us a visit.

"There's a Providence in it!" cried Mrs. Sawyer. "Here's the very man I want to my house!"

Some time before she'd went to the door of an east side house to leave a big bundle of close for a dear freind who was sewing there by the day which, when she rung the bell the hired man come to the door. It was afternoon so he had his close changed and his hair slicked up and looked reel nobby. She would of took him for the man of the house only she knew him by sight and he wan't anywhere's near so dis-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

tang gay, so she said. But the silver salver he passed out for the bundle wan't no bigger than a postal card and twant no wonder it fell off on the floor. She took sech a shine to him that she vowed she'd get one like him as near as she could, but she made up her mind that she would have trays of differant sizes handy according to the size of the bundles brought to the door, if they wassent nothing but tin. Mrs. Sawyer spends the extry money Ben sends her awful foolish sometimes though she never does no harm with it. Last week when she bought an antic chair of a dealer that was going round with only three legs, Jim says, "What ails the woman?" And when Mame reminded him she had money to burn he says, "Well then, why don't she burn it?" It didnt make no odds to him if some big man had set in it (that was everdent enough) he would perfer the quadruped kind.

Well, if she took a notion to anything,

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

she wanted to get it and she took a notion to Jason, from the way he worked and him being so quiet and civel. "He's jest what I've been looking for because he looks jest like that hired man on the east side." ("Which side of him is that?" says Mame, sort of vochy.) "Call him in," she says, "and I will offer him 5\$ a week on the spot."

She had been making her observances from the setting-room while he was to work in the kitchen. We called him in but when we give her an interduction to him and he looked at her with his sollem black eyes accompanying them with a beautiful bow from the waste up, that was so full of self respeck that he seemed to be bowing to himself, she lost all her self commandment and haddent a word to say. She remarked afterwoods that she would as soon darsted to ask King Edward to remove her ashes.

So he lost that job jest by his looks; but maybe it's all for the best. Praps him and

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

her woudent be adaptuated to one another and besides we'd miss him terryble if he went away. He aint what you'd call lively compenny because he hardly ever speaks and as for laughing, Jim says his laughing appyraters must be rusty from lack of disuse; but he's so diffrent from the rest of the folks we know that it kind of takes up our minds thinking and conjecturating about him. He's so dark complected in the face we don't know but he's got Injun blood in his veins; and maybe he's a descendant of Pocky Honters, her that rescued the life of John Smith in the history. He aint got no background, as you might say, same as them new kind of folks' pictures in the maggezines. Instead of having a flower garding behind them or a studio full of crazy objecks sech as studios have to have (though I never could tell why) or even a handsome parlor; but there they are by themselves, and if you want to guess anything you are forced to do it by

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

their face or their attitude. I like it. And I don't know much about sech things but I like it better when a saint in a picture aint got any halow round his head, like a labell. The haylow had ought to be in the face.

Mr. Spinney, recalling our talk in the park about books, says to me yesterday, "Well, Lady Jane, you've got another volume in your small libery and I hope you find it interesting."

"Yes," I says, "though it's in a forrin language and I can't read it yet."

Even the stories he tells the children aint like what they've heard before not being funny one's like Mr. Spinney's but are ones from history and his theology, as he calls it. Once when Gussy says to him, "Tell us a story about a little boy bout as big as me," he riz right up with an awful look of pain in his face and went to pacing the floor. So much so that Mandy rushed off for the Jamaica ginger bottle, thinking

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

the tripe we'd had for dinner wan't setting very well. But he motioned away the doce, reminding her he hadn't et any of it. Mandy don't know much about any pain that aint phyzicle. But phyzicle pain is nothing but fun compared to the other kind. Still—who'd be Mandy?

Speaking about Mr. Spinney, him and Jason don't take to each other as sociable as I wish they would; and, in fack, Mr. Spinney hardly ever comes in now. I hear him come into the house early every night, though, so I expect he spends the evening with Ellen and her mother. Maybe she is learning to love him, same as they do in books; but the thought don't make me so happy as I calkilated it would. I don't know why I hope if they do match up they will be as happy as Mame and Jim. Mr. Spinney has said that it knocks out all the laws of astronomy the way their honeymoon keeps awaxing and awaxing with never a sign of a wane. I can see Jason

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

takes notice of it, too, by the way he watches them when they are together. And one day he remarked their love seemed deep and strong, adding it was fortunet they was so well adaptuated to each other.

"But they aint adaptuated to each other at all!" I says. That's the meracle of love, that it makes one of two people that is composed of sech conflicting elements. Love is kind of a universal solvant that mixes anything. Jim and Mame don't like the same kind of things at all. She is kind of high-strung and wants a lot going on—wants the band playing all the time. He is slow and easy-going and likes when he aint to work a quiet time with his fambly round the fireside (or the back steps,—according to the elements) but it's this way: Mame loves him more than she does the band and his affexions for her over-weighs his feeling for the chimbly corner. So each one gets a lot of playsure sacrificing up something they want for the sake

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

of the other—especielly Jim. Of course they have their scraps—that's a part of it, and it aint alwers plessant or salubrious to be round when they are going on; but you can feel sure at sech times that a honey-dew spell is sure to foller. Yesterday morning Mame said something middling sharp to Jim when he was going off to work without any provocation and he didn't make no answer—jest closed the door soft and went out. But his feet sounded awful heavy on the stairs, jest as if he was tired out or discurridged. It wan't a very pleassant way to begin a long hard day of work.

It was soon made mannyfest in the kitchen that Mame didn't feel jest right about it. Didn't things slambang round there for a spell! I didn't pay no attention to it. It simply showed the law of gravitation was still in foarce and made no exceptions in faver of pots and pans and pie-plates. Mandy verry discreditly withdrew, ostentatiously to make up the beds, but in

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

reality to seek refuse from the coming storm.

At last Mame couldn't stand it no longer. She says, "Jen, you watch the bread in the oven a spell. I got to do an arrant."

I knew she'd gone to the shop to make up with Jim, and I told Jason so; but as we watched her out of the winder we saw her stop at the corner,—where she was met by Jim!

"Yes," I says, "he was on the way to ask her forgiveness."

"He ask her forgiveness!" cries Jason; "that aint common sense."

"No," I says; "and if common sense was a little more uncommon this would be a happyer world. It's all right to have it to apply to the work of the shop and the kitchen and every where else but love don't need it. Don't you know how hard it is for the one that's in the wrong to ask forgiveness? It's the one that aint done a thing that it's the easiest for. The sense

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

that there aint anything to ask it for kind of boys them up. Then they are the ones to do it, I say."

"Of all of the ridiculous"—he begun, and then he stopped and looked awful thoughtful for a long time with his head on his hand. He often sets like that, sometimes foller'd by writing sheet after sheet of paper usually tearing it up afterwoods. Yesterday after Mame got back (happy as a bird in springtime) he went to writing again; but all to a sudden he stopped and with a groan, sunk his head down on his arms on the table. I slipped softly out of the room and left him alone; but before I left I laid a newspaper on top of what he'd been writing because I knew he had forgot all about it, and Mrs. Ezry Sawyer is apt to come in any minute. She makes excuses to come in often and we can all see who she comes to see, all but Jason himself, and he is so oblivious of her presence that it almost seems as if she was ackchelly invis-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ble to him. She says she don't know what ever possessed her to think of getting him for a hired man, as she now feels she could welcome him in a higher and holier relation than that. Then right before him she gets off a lot of talk about her love for her husband being nothing but a boy and girl feeling and about it is only later when a woman has reached the limitations of her powers and has superimposed and expandified that she is caperble of perfeck love. He was scouring the knives when she got this out of her system, and jest here he asked Mandy where the drying-off rag was. Mame says she thought he wanted to gag her with it. He acks so exackly as he dident hear her that she's got it in her head that he takes deef spells. And Jim says maybe he reely has got the lost muscle I tell about. He has reference to a little idee I have got about your ear. You know there is a little lid in front of your ear jest large enough to cover the opening, same as there

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

is a lid to your eyes, only this aint self-acting like the eyelid, and you have to shut it with your fingers. Now my idee is that primevil man had a muscle there so he could open and shut it when he wanted to same as he could his eyes; but from their desire to hear everything that was going on he kep it open and the muscle was lost through disuse. I read about the camel being able to open and shut his nostrums at will to keep the flying dust out of his nose on the desert, and we have got kind of weak muscles there too. The saying "Keep your eyes and ears open" must of been made up when that could be done. I wisht we could do that now—close up our ears to any unwelcome sounds without being noticed. And how easy sick people would drop off to sleep when they could shut out all sound. And Jim says there's certain times when a fambly man would find it a comfort.

Well, Jason acks for all the world as if

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

he could and did close his ears on various occasions. She tells jokes to cheer him up and he don't even smile. She says it's a pity any one with sech handsome teeth shouldn't have a sense of umor. She added there was a time during which Ben couldn't see a joke and that was when he'd had a front tooth knocked out. But after he'd been fixed up at the dentist's he saw 'em quick enough. She declares Jason aint got any sech excuse. Jim says he don't laugh at her jokes on account of them being so venerable—that his respeck for the aged would keep him from laughing.

Seeing she didn't have no luck brightening him up this way what did she do but fetch over an elixer for him that she bragged on to build up his blood and renew his strength. Mame declared how she knew it was some harmless stuff she'd mixed up herself jest for an excuse to make of him.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Well," says Jim, "if it's only play-tonic what you grumbling about?"

But if I keep on writing like this the sewing-machine will get all rusted up. So I will draw to a close.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XXI

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

Seeing you said you would like to know how serten matters has turned out I am awful glad I have something pleassant to tell you—something that changes the aspesk of the whole house and makes the second story a love story, as Mr. Spinney says. Jim told him it didn't get as far as chap. 2, but though the joke was supposed to be on him he done his duty by laughing at it.

The evening after that one when I see Ellen Hennersy coming out of the pothecary shop we was setting quiet as usual in the setting-room. We take sollem comfort evenings when the children has been put to bed. Mr. Spinney most always used to be with us and Ellen would often run in; but since she has ben so low-sperited she don't

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

feel like meeting strangers, especially any one so imposing as Jason, and we don't hardly ever see Mr. Spinney now. Jim says it wouldn't take very deep scientifical study to trace a connection between these two facks. Well, Mame usually reads out loud and Jim stretches himself out on the couch and listens. Sis always runs and gets what he calls the lounge-extension for her father. It's an old chair put to the end of the lounge for his feet, seeing it is only ordinerry lenth and he reaches forth into space a long distance beyond.

Mr. Spinney used to set in the morris chair but Jason generally sets there now, most frequent leaning his head on his hand and aparently listening also, but doing more thinking than listening, I guess. I set by the table and sew and sometimes Mandy sews, too. She does overcasting pretty good but we don't trust her to mend stockings as they are quite painful to wear afterwards. I let her cobble up a pair for

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

me once jest to please her and I limped all the time I wore them. I couldent help it. She can pop corn first rate if she puts her whole mind on it and sometimes we have that or some other treat at the close of the evening. When eggs is plenty we fry a few on top of the coals and with hot coffy the men folks thinks it tastes awful good. All but Jason. He's a light eater and we wonder what keeps him alive.

Well, we was setting there and bymeby Mame says to me, "Are you expecting to see anybody? You appear to be in a listening attitood."

"No," I says, and I hadn't realized I had appeared to be listening.

Pretty soon after that a heavy footstep come in the front door, coughed a couple of times and went up stairs.

"Sounds for all the world like Dinny Caffretty," says Mame; and it wan't long before we heard Ellen larfing as she hadn't larfed goodness knows when and her

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

mother joined in. Then there was singing and finelly there come the thumping on the sealing that meant that Mrs. Hennersy was singing the Rushes song. Later there come a knock to the door, which when I opened it there stood Ellen all joy and happyness.

"Mame," she says, "can we have your corn popper? We got company."

When I took it out in the entry to her she larfed and whispered, "It's him! He says he didn't darst to come before on account of me treating him like I did on the street and serten little remarks that I have let slip have been enlarged and falsified beyond description."

"How about the demmingstraighter?" I inquired.

"Oh! that wan't nothing at all. He jest saw her home a couple of times at her personal request and Mrs. Sawyer got wind of it and made a great todo about it. He says the fellers calls her Goldilocks

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

though she is 40, and she has got a couple of husbands somewhere that is nice God-fearing men as ever lived but she would rather ockipy a position in the face and eyes of the multitood than stay home & cherk them up when they are sad and loanly and cook their vittles. She aint got her bill from the last one yet so she aint in any position to except attentions from the likes of Dinny even if he wanted hide nor hair of her which he don't, and goose that I was to think so for a single minute."

By this time she was all out of breath with talking and larfing both together but she added as she run off (without the popper), "You see our prayers was answered without the human agency sech as you told about."

And I didn't have the heart to Shatter sech simple faith.

We wasn't so very much suprised to find that Mrs. Ezry Sawyer was at the bottom

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

of the trouble seeing Ellen had had a good deal to do with Ben leaving home. She'll never forgive her, I expect, for abringing on him that disappointment and greaf. But Ellen couldn't help being sweet and pretty and lovable, and if the moth got caught in the trap it was his own fault, and I am glad his mother's scheme to bring the same sorrer on Ellen was flusterated. She would of been sorry for Ellen herself if she realized how bad she felt. She aint a bad-hearted woman but Ben is all she's got in the world.

Mr. Spinney likes to plague Ellen about the eppysode and he says:

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: she might have
had Ben."

The nex day but one.

I aint had a minute to finish your letter
as ther is a great holiday rush in my busi-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ness and besides I got an awful lot on my mind. When I got home yesterday with some new work Gussy says,

"O aunt Jennie! The South America lady has ben here to see you and she is coming again."

He means Mrs. Sawyer. He calls her that because her chin comes down to a point and her face is kind of one-sided so it looks like the map of South America. Her chin does resemble Cape Horn to a serten extent but I tell Gussy it aint pretty to notice sech things.

Well, I knew what Mrs. Sawyer was up to. She was going to renew her attackt about the opshen and tideland business; so I was bound to get red of Jamesy's money as quick as I could to put myself out of temptation, for it was more of a temptation than I would own up to. To think with that little money I could make enough for us all to go to Chictoooset nex summer and give the presants I have planned be-



FRENCH

"The South America lady"



THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

sides is enough to temp any one. Sometimes I think it's safe but not right and sometimes I feel as it was right but not safe, and then again as if it wan't one nor tother. What I want to do is to get red of the money before I get round to thinking its both.

You have to do what you think is right; but that aint all because it aint right to think a thing is right when it aint. You see we have alwers ben planning to go back to Chictooseet on a visit where we used to live ever since we moved away from there 9 years ago. It was where our payrents and grand payrents was born and raised and we think there aint any place like it. We wouldn't ever left there if it hadn't been that me and Jim and Mame could all be earning in the city and we needed the money.

We own the old homestid yet and we let it to a summer fambly that says we are welcome to go there any time between Novem-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ber and June the first exclusive. I cant begin to tell you how us grown-up folks long to take the childern there and they are jest crazy about it themselves. All their favoryte stories is about the old town and they know all about the people and places there. To be sure there has ben changes but not many. The freinds that writes us from there tells us our old place looks jest the same. The pansys and ladies-delights that Mother planted blossoms every year, they say. What wouldn't I give to see them!

We plan every year to go and spend the month of May there—all but Jim and he will spend his week's vacation with us. When May is all most here we find we cant go owing, as Jim says, to a stringency in the money market. But we say we will go the nex year and it reely seems probberble. It continues to be very probberble till along about Januerry when it don't seem so much

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

so, and somewherees around Febuerry (I can't tell jest exactly when) it changes from probberble to simply possible; and the change from possible to impossible, which occurs in April, is unperceptible to the naked eye. This has been going on for 9 years and this is the time of year when May in Chictooset is a sure thing; but recalling past disappointments, I should like to clinch it if I could before it becomes a wild and venturous flight of the realms of fancy. Mrs. Sawyer thinks I can clinch it by follering her advice but I feel as if I didn't have no right to trifle with Jamsey's money. I am what you might call the self-appointed ministrater of his little estate and I have planned and planned and planned how to give the most possible happiness in his name. There aint enough for a memorable widow or a bed in a hospital so I have got it done up in differant peaces of paper with what it's for wrote on the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

outside. I know a number of self-respecting people that is having a tough time to keep their heads above water but never complain and would ruther die than let folks know what a tussle they was having. And I am going to give a few of them useful gifis.

A woman that lives near here has got a great parcel of childern and he gets awful small pay. She gets along fair to middling as a general thing because she has got a lot of faculty about fixing over their close and she is a great contriver about food. She could keep her fambly in good shape on what another woman would heave away. But this fall she is all run down and looks like she was on the verge of a sick spell. Wash day jest about uses her up and she has to lay down almost all the nex day between the ironing. Her washings is something terrible in size and if she didn't have to use herself up on them she could probberbly hold out. So I am going

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

to give her 16\$—enough to hire it for three months.

Then there is old Mrs. Newcome down to Chictooset. Her and her daughter Pamelia lives alone together and Pamelia clerks in Peterses store. The mother is all alone most of the day and I guess she must get pretty blue by spells. She writ to Mame last summer how disappointed she was on account of us not making our visit in Chictooset and it was jest the same as she writes every summer (Jim says it would save time down there if they would have a rubber stamp with their centiments on it to use every year, but though he tries to carry it off with a joke I know he is the most disappointed of all mostly on account of the little boys and also Mother's grave) only last summer she says, "Pamelia is awful good and kind to me and I have everything nice and comferble; but I do wish you could send me one of them hearty larfs sech as we used to have together. The neigh-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

bors don't run in as they used to. I don't expeck I'm very bright company but I al-wers try to be."

Now I am going to send her a whole lot of larfs. They are going in a fonygraft that I have planned for her, and Mr. Spinney is agoing to pick out the most side-spliting peices there is for it. He has got some himself he says he is tired of and he will add them. We liked to died larfing one night when he wound them up for us. That will make the neighbors run in like sixty for they will all be crazy over the fonygraft. They all think a heap of Pamelia and her mother but they don't realize the old lady is alone so much by herself.

Old Capten Joe Silliker is a man we've alwers thought the world of. He follerded the sea as Capten of the Flying Judith for years and made a lot of money but was so free-handed and generous he went through every cent of it; and now he lives with his neice. She is poorer than poverty but she

We liked to die'd larfing one night when he wound them up for us





THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

gives him a home. He can't ever have sech lugsuries as tobacker and it alwers cuts me to the heart to think of him without his pipe which hardly ever went out in his parmy days. But he is going to have enough now to keep it agoing in full blast for 6 months.

I aint forgot how he used to let us play hide and seek when we was little in the cabin of the Flying Judith when she was in port and on the middle of our setting room shelf is a little ivory ship he fetched home to Mother when she was a girl from Chiny.

The name of the schooner, the Flying Judith, was a compromise and, like most compromises wan't very satisfactory to either one side or tother. Even sence he was a teenty bit of a boy he'd had his dreams about follerig the sea and had alwers looked forrad to having command of a craft named the Flying Arrer. This was on account of it being a book named The

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Flying Arrer that give him his hankering for the sea. Well, when he was part owner of a schooner that was built and had the naming of her he had got to be a married man and it wan't sech a simple matter then to give the name of his boyhood's fancy, seeing he didn't have the supream power to home that he had on the raging billow. His wife's name was Judith and when we saw The Flying Judith painted on the stern of the new vessel we knew it was her decision—"her stern decision," as Mr. Spinney has said.

The name don't sound so funny to them that don't know how slow in her motions Jude Silliker was. But both Judiths is gone now—the flying one at the bottom of the sea somewhere round the coast of Swis-sterland, and the slow-moving one in the old graveyard behind the church. It don't make no odds how slow-moving we are, we all of usll get there some time or other. Capten Joe writ the verse on her tomb

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

stone himself. He said it was the last sad privilege he could perform for her and it peared to give him sattisfaction to do it.

This verse was spoke once for a peice in school and quite an onpleassant ockurence was the consequents. I guess them that lived in Chictooset at the time wont ever forget it. It was spoke by a deliket but well-meaning little boy named Willie Jameson. He was a little orphan boy that had ben took by his uncle, old Jabe Hinckley, and I guess his home wan't a very happy one on account of his uncle's wife being sech a tarter. When the teacher give out that they'd got to have peices for the nex Friday they all went home and went to hunting up the peices. I recolleck what a todo there was to our house helping Jim pick out his. The whole fambly pitched in and helped. Finelly we settled on The Berrial of Moses, Mother being always a great favorite of that pome. Our work wasn't accomplished even then, because he

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

had to have a lot of help learning it, seeing it was always hard to commit things off by heart.

But the little Jameson boy didn't darst to ask to have books to find a peice in (sech as they was and very few of them) and so he went to the graveyard to find one. Anybody seeing the poor little white-livered feller wandering round there wouldn't think he was much ahead of time.

When Friday come and all the children was dressed up in their Sunday close, and one after the other got up and spoke off their piece when his turn come he went up to the plackform in the same close he wore doing the chores (all he had) and said off the verse:

"Free from sorrer, care and strife,
Lies Judith, Joseph Silliker's wife.
Angels come and bore her away,
But we'll see her again on Jedgment Day."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

There was a titter all round and one of the boys laughed out loud. His teacher, Mary Liz Henbury, was madder than git-out. She grabbed the ferule and told him to come to her. He went and stood before her, trembling in every pore. "Hold out your hand," she says; and he held it out, nothing but a little mite of skin and bone. Down come the black walnut ferule, whack after whack. Then he groped his way back to his seat, the hurt hand held out in front of him, the other arm hiding his face. When he got to his seat his head sunk down on his arms on the desk.

"I will learn you to show respeck to dead and respectable people!" she says. "Now I want to know if you're ever going to cut up sech a caper again." He didn't make no answer and she raised her voice still louder and says, "Air you?"

He kep on making no answer and when she took aholt of his head to raise it up they see he'd fainted away.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Very gentle the big boys lugged him outdoor to the fresh air (they wouldn't let Mary Liz touch him) and they run to the spring for water to revive him up with and done everything they could till he come to. Then they helped him home.

When Jim come home he was awful excited over it and he told how mad the scholars was and how numbered Mary Liz Henbury's days was there, so they all declared.

"She wouldn't have darsted to lick him that way," he says, "if he'd had folks."

But Mother stopped him and says, "Now, James, you musn't bring home stories like that from school, and take sides against the teacher. You'd a good deal better be talking over your Sabbath School lesson."

But that night in the middle of the night I heard her apraying and saying, "Heav-enly Father, dont take me away from my children! don't take me away from my chil-dren!"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I don't know what ever become of that little boy. The Hinckleys moved out west ('pears to me it was New Braska they went to) and took him with them. I don't believe he lived to grow up. After that fracas in school he used to come into our house evenings and him and Jim would do their sums together. He was an awful bright scholar and he was a great help to Jim. And then Jim helped him out in cases where main strenth was called for. Mother made a good deal of him, too. Sis says my plan about keeping Capten Joe's pipe lit reminds her of a story in the reading book that always makes her cry when she reads it. It's about a little pleasant girl in France that had no earthly mother to love and so she wanted to do something to show her love for her heavenly one. She was very poor and had to work all day but she gathered a few nuts in the night and managed to buy a little oil to keep a tiny lamp burning before a way-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

side shrine. This lamp never went out while she lived and it was by this little light they found her dead one night at the foot of the shrine, a smile of happiness on her face and the thin little hands clasped in prayer. Then there's a picture that goes with it that shows the heavenly mother coming with her arms stretched out to take her to heaven.

It's sech a beautiful story it don't seam right to compare Capten Joe's pipe to the shrine and Sis says herself it don't sound pretty like that to us but she guesses it would to Capten Joe. It beats everything how Shattucky that child is and increasing in it every day of her life!

Another poor old soul there is the Widd'er Billings. She gets a small pension but she helps her daughter and fambly with it. Her son died in the war and he was the pride and joy of her heart, a cussid looking objeck, so Jim says, if you will excuse the expression, and I am going to have his tin-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

type enlarged. His mother's eyes is failing and she greaves that she can't see his feachers plain. Wont she rejoice in the life's sized picture! His brother-in-law says he had sech mean ways that if the civel war hadn't accomplished anything else it done well to scoop Zeke Billings offen the face of the earth. I don't think he liked him.

There's a little boy comes here sometimes on arrants and when he come for the work bundle I took notice how white-livercd he looked and how diffrent from our boys. I says to him once, "You had ought to drink more milk," and he says, "Father don't get but 7\$ a week and we have to go kind of slow on milk."

So he is going to have an extry quart of milk every day for a month.

2\$ worth of bright colored worsteds for Feby Maxwell up to the poor house in Chictooseet to croshay with will give lots of happyness. She loves to croshay and begs

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

for old stockings to unravel out and croshay them over into mats and doll's hoods. Then there will be enough left to get a big package of flower seeds for a woman I know that loves gardening and flowers but never has no cash for sech things.

That is zll but it has took me some time to plan it all out. I know Jamesey will be pleased. Dear little feller! he was born on Friday and was loving and giving.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XXII

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

Jason has gone. A month ago he wan't here because we hadn't ever heard of him then. Now he aint here and it hadn't ought to be different from what it was then. But there's so much difference it seems as if we couldn't stand it. I wish—Oh! I wish that Mr. Spinney would come in and cheer the folks up. I am trying to but I aint much good at it and he promised to come in to-day. I hope he aint forgot it.

I must tell you just how it happened. Yesterday morning Mame was down town and she had took the baby with her in his carriage. Mandy was to work in the kitchen and Jason was helping me put the setting-room to rights when a carriage drove up to the door. As it was the only one

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

that had ever come into the street except for funerals, everybody in the neighborhood was natchelly excited over it and a face at every window watched a slight young lady and a little boy about as big as Gussy get out and run up the steps. I went to the door when the bell rung and there stood the sweetest little fair-haired lady I'd seen for many a day, ahoulding the boy by the hand. When she looked up and asked in her pretty eager way if Mr. Bocham-bray was there, I didn't have time to answer for a voice it seemed as if I hadn't ever heard before cried, "Natalie!" and she was in Jason's arms.

There didn't seem a very urgerent need for me there so I went back to the setting-room; but I could hear her laughing and crying and scolding in that pretty voice of hers through the closed door. Bymeby they come in, Natalie and the boy (jest the living image of Jason) clinging to Jason's hands, and the little feller hiding

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

his face in Jason's coat when he spied me.

Then Jason said (with Oh! such a lot of pride in his voice) "Jennie I want you to know my wife; and Nelly, this is my freind, Miss Allen."

"Are you Jennie Allen?" she cried; and with that she come up to me and give me a tight hug, asaying, "You blessed thing! You dear, adorable, blessed thing!"

I was surprised enough, I can tell you, but Jason was full as much so. "How in the world," he says, "do you know Miss Jennie Allen?"

"Why!" she says; "she's our good fairy that wrote and told me to come. She told me not to tell you but you know I alwers tell you everything."

I thought I would sink right down through the floor and I was agoing to leave the room but she held on to me with both her little hands (she had lovely hands with jewels asparkling on them) and says, "Please tell us all about it, Jennie, because

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I don't understand it myself. All I know is you wrote he needed me and told me where he was."

He looked at me in amazement. "How did you know our name?" he said. "I have never written it in this city nor have I had it on any of my belongings. And how could you know, even, that I had a wife?"

"O Etien!" she cried in a hurt voice; "didn't you tell her that?"

He didn't answer her then, but he put his arm awful tender around her and waited for me to speak.

"I knew you was feeling awful bad and undecided about something," I says; "and when I put a newspaper over what you'd ben writing that time, I couldn't help seeing the first 3 words—'Natalie, my Wife.' I hoped you'd send it but you didn't cause I saw you tear it up afterwards. Then when you was talking to Mr. Oglevie about town government (I guess most likely you

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

remember it) and you told him how a ser-
ten way to carry things on was the best
way and he said it wan't prackitable, you
told him it was because it was a decisive
success in a small town in Virginny."

"Yes, I remember that."

"And when he asked you what town that
was, you didn't answer right off but stopped
a little bit before you said Altaville. It
was you making that hessytation that made
me think maybe that was where you lived;
so I writ to the postmaster there asking
the name of a lady named Natalie whose
husband had an extry dark complection
and black whiskers atravelling in the north,
and answering to the name of Jason.

"He answered and that's how I got the
name."

"You had ought to join the detecting
foarce!" cries Natalie; "but tell me didn't
our postmaster tell you his name wasn't
Jason?"

"Yes, and I'm glad he knew who was

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

wanted, even with that mistake." I can't tell you how I hated to let him know how I'd ben ameddling in his fambly affairs like this; and I was getting my courage up to tell him I wouldn't of done it if I didn't see he needed a freind and I couldn't think of any other way to help him; but I didn't have to because after a moment he says:

"Jennie, do you know what you have done? You have brought me and my precious wife together when, I fear, we was slowly drifting apart. I shall never speak of this again excepting to her father but we think we owe it to you to make you a full explanation."

"O no, no!" I says; "I'd rather not hear it."

Without paying no heed to that he went on and said that 6 weeks ago he'd had a business opportunity that would probably bring him in a large fortune if he embraced it, but he couldn't look upon it as honest

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

and he declined not to have anything to do with it.

"But my wife," he says, "viewed the matter differently"—

"But in my heart I didn't!" she interrupts.

"And when I refused to go into it"—

"Let me finish!" she cries. "When he refused to go into it because his high sense of honor wouldn't allow him, though men that the world calls honest do the same thing every day, I was so angry that I told him he didn't care how poor he kep me (I had alwers wanted a cottage at Newport) and I knew he couldn't go against my wishes if he reely loved me and I wouldn't care if he went away and I never saw him again. I don't know how I could ever say that, even without meaning it, to one as good and kind as he has alwers ben. I'd alwers acted like a spoiled baby, though, and took a foolish delight in showing my

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

power over him. Father used to say Etien had too much patience and I myself thought it had no limit. But this time he was terrible angry or else grievously hurt —I tortured myself trying to think which when he had left me.

"He went away nex morning leaving a note saying he was going away on business and he couldn't tell when he would return. I was nearly wild for I knew why he had gone; and when three weeks had passed and I'd had no word from him I made Father write to several of his freinds in the North to find if they had seen him but they hadn't. (He wrote in such a way, Etien, that they wouldn't know we had lost you.) Then I begged him to employ detectives and I think he would have done so if your letter hadn't come. Of course they couldn't have found him and—I can't bear to think of it," she says, burying her face in her hands.

"Then don't ever think of it again, darling," he says. "That cursed pride of mine

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

has caused you terrible suffering; and yet it was not wholly pride that kep me away. Under my freind Jennie's wholesome influence I was coming round to considering only your good and your happiness. She simply changed over into a shorter process."

You can see as well that it wasn't me at all but his conscience and his love for his wife; but I only says, "Yes, but I thought you was wasting precious time."

I had took up my sewing soon as they begun to talk because I didn't feel so awkward when I was asewing, but I'd a good deal ruther they hadn't told me all this. It wan't necessary for anybody but themselves to know it. When I told him I thought he was wasting time by making up his mind so slow, he says, "Yes, time and that nicely ruled paper of yours that I kep tearing up."

"You know you was welcome to the paper."

"Yes, I did know it jest as I know I have

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

ben welcome to everything in this house. Natalie, this is a household with the true communistic sperit. If you were to remain here a year and contributed nothing yourself you would never be reminded that you were using others' property and you wouldn't be from their standpoint. What a fine nucleus" (I got him to spell this for me afterwards) "this would make for a new Brook Farm or another Utopia!"

I don't know what he was driving at but I remembered it all to write you.

"Even the baby of the house has imbibed the spirit of the house and addresses me as Man."

"That's because he can't say Uncle Jason yet," I says.

"I prefer to think it is because he takes me for jest what I am—jest plain straight man."

At that moment Mandy's voice come from the kitchen in loud tones—"Jason, the coal is out!" and what did she do but come

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

to the door and hand him the hod. I thought die I should though not blaming poor Mandy seeing she wan't expected to know who the elegant dressed lady was. But before I could do anything about it he'd took the hod jest as usual and gone down to the bacement for the coal.

His wife's face was a study, as the saying is. "Where has he gone?" she inquired.

When I stammered out that he usually brought the coal when Jim wan't here, first she looked puzzled and then she went off in a peal of laughter that it done me good to hear. "Oh! oh!" she cried aholding onto her heart (she was all out of breath from laughing) "I never saw anything so funny in all my life—the proud and distinguished count of Bochambray carrying coal!"

"Hush, Natalie;" he said as he come back again; "we are to lunch to-day with freinds who have all helped to earn or prepare the meal. Our only contribution is

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

my bringing that fuel upstairs. Is it too much?"

"Are you a count?" was all I could say.

"Not exackly," he says, "though I would be if there were sech things in this country, as I am the oldest son in the direck line of the Counts of Bochambray. But my fambly for many generations has lived in Virginny so I would forget all about it if this small wife of mine didn't remind me of it on occasions like this."

I knew how pleased Mame would be to find out Jason was a nobleman of high degree, so when I saw her coming I asked him if he wouldn't please introduce Natalie as the Countess of Bochambray and then I would introduce him as the Count, her husband. They kind of larfed at this but he said he would do it to please me. So when Mame come in he done as I said. Natalie looked quite Countessy when she was being introduced but very uncountessy when she saw the baby. She seemed almost

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

like a baby herself when she made a dash for him, catching him up and talking baby talk to him.

Mame wasn't so very much surprised about Jason. She says, "We have thought you was everything from a burgler or a Indian down to a forrin noble man."

"Down?" says Jason smiling.

Mame fell in love with Natalie to once and Natalie fell in love with Mame and the baby, and the two mothers had a nice long intercourse on matters pertaining to children, Natalie asking Mame's advice about how to reggleate little Adrien's diet. We soon found out she'd ben in the habit of regglating it by letting him have most anything he wanted to eat. Then she made an excuse for it by saying with a pretty seriousness, "I think after all nature is the best gide. If Adrien craved a serten food it would seem as if that was what his system requiered—don't you think so, Mrs. Allen?"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

'And when Mame wan't looking she gave our baby some chocolate creams out of her shattylane bag and after she had gone he had 2 mild spazzums as a consequence.

Speaking of that bag Mr. Spinney said last night it was a sure-enough shattylane bag because Natalie was a shattylane in the French langwidge, countess meaning shattylane. He knows ever so many words in French and he has learnt Sis quite a lot. He says they call mother mare, which don't sound respeckful to me. Now a mare is mother to a colt more often than not, but it seems kind of funny for it to mean a mother to anything else. Then pair is father when a father is only half of a pair, and in some famblies not even that. But more curiouser than that is their calling their sisters sis though spelling it soeur (I wonder where phoneticacism is needed most, here or in France!) and the only gleam of reason I can see in the whole thing is their calling a girl's marriage portion

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

her dough, though it sounds siangy even for us. But take it all in all, I should say it was an awful crazy langwidge and I don't wonder Jason's ancestors wanted to come over here where they could talk sense.

I asked Mr. Spinney what home was in french and he says there want no word for it reely but thy have to say shay moi in place of it and that is simply at me. Aint that redicklous? So when thy sing home sweat home thay have to say

"Shay moi, shay, shay moi,
Be it evar so umble
Thay's no place like shay moi."

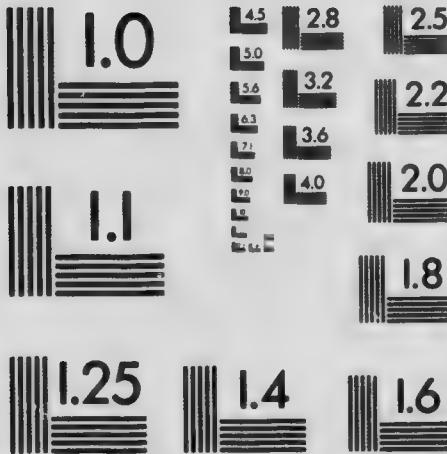
And that is

"At me, at, at me,
Be it ever so umble
Thay's no place like at me."

Well, when Jason and Natalie told us they must leave for home soon as dinner (or lunch, as they called it) we felt bad enough; and Mame said she was going to



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482-0300 - Phone
(716) 288-5989 - Fax

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

send Bub down to the shop to see if Jim couldn't come to dinner as soon as he got home from school and had his face washed. She done so and Jim got off for an hour and a quarter. Soon as Jim found out the folks belonged to the nobility he felt awful awkword and said he'd a good deal ruther they'd be jest plain folks. Then he wanted to know if he had got to keep asaying "your highness" to them same as they do in Sir Walter Scott's stories.

Jason give him a slap on the shoulder and said he'd like to see him try it. "I don't get anything but Etien," he says, "in my home town—hardly ever Mr. with it."

"Is Jason your middle name?" we inquired.

"No, though I have grown so attached to it I shall feel like adopting it permanently. My father's name was Jean so I am J's son—do you see? and will you forgive the deception? To tell you the truth,"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

(but what follered was only a part of the truth, as I alone knew) "I had ben passing through a very trying experience when I come here and I was wore out and disgusted with life. I wanted to drop my very name. I went whither the winds drove me, not caring much what befell me." (Here his wife come over to him and took aholt of his hand, keeping it in hers a long time.) "When chance brot me to this house I says to myself, as well here as elsewhere, until circumstances drive me away again."

"But circumstances has come, hasn't she, dear," says Natalie, "to drive you home?" putting her cheek loving against his.

"I have suffered much in my mind during this month," he went on as he returned her caress, "yet would not have missed this stay with you for all the world. It has ben a relevation to me. I have never seen before family union and affection like yours, and I bless the power that brought

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

me to this little world of loving kindness."

Natalie hung her head and then she raised it again, a whole world of penitence and high ressylution in her eyes. As for the rest of us we didn't know what to make of sech a speech; but we put it down to the French being extry polight and egsagerat-ing any little thing you do for them. Jim looked awful uncomferble and finelly he says, "Look here, Jason; what you trying to get off? Count or no count, we aint agoing to take credit that all belongs on tother side. Here you've ben giving your time aworking for us, easing up the burdens of the womenfolks when I wan't round." Here a gleam of mischif come into his eyes, and he adds, "I don't know who's agoing to clean the lamps now. I'd like to know what's contribbeted to the brightness of the home more than the good jorb you done on them lamps after you'd practiced awhile."

This made everybody laugh especially

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Natalie and then we felt easier. Mr. Spinney happened in and Mame made him stay to dinner, so that made 11 of us to set round the table. We asked Mr. Spinney to dish up the soup and when he lifted the cover of the big tureen and looked in he said he felt like Balbore discovering the Pacific Ocean, and Jason asked how many cows went to the making of a beef soup that size.

Mr. Spinney give an account of us catching Jason in the trap to Natalie and he set it off in great style.

"We've all ben trying to make it up to Jason for what he went through with in the trap that night," says Mame, "because every one of us had a hand in it."

"All but Jason himself. He had a foot in it," says Mr. Spinney.

Natalie remarked 'twas no wonder that Mame's dark suspitions was aroused by the black whiskers and she now hoped Etien would have them cut off as she had long

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

begged him to do. Jason said I hadn't expressed an opinion on the subjeck yet so I said I liked only a reasonable mustash the best—not one like the king of Germany's that was part of his back view, but one like Mr. Spinney's that showed moderation. "In fack," I says, "I like his the best I've ever come in contack with."

"O Jen!" they all shouted; and die I thought I should. I didn't darst to look at him and he didn't look at me. But in spite of me being so mortified it seemed lovely to have that secret with jest him. I suppose it was on account of me not being used to secrets. I now had 2 on my mind. Jason had told me he felt jest as safe about his as if it was something he'd dropped in a deep well; but the other one is safer than that.

When I was bringing on the flapjacks me and Mandy was frying for a topping-off dish and I put an extry large pile on Jim's plate on account of him being so hearty,

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Jason says, "That reminds me, Jim, to ask about your digestion now."

Mame laughed and says Jim could digest board nails if necessary and asked him what he meant, seeing Jim made no answer.

"Oh!" said Jason; "I jest happened to think what he remarked to me the other day when I remarked he wan't smoking as much as usual. He says, "No; I've heard considdable about smoking being bad for the digestion, and a feller can't be too careful about sech things." That morning he'd give me a half dollar saying it might come in handy for newspapers and car-fares. I wondered if there was any connection between them two things."

"Oh!" cried Natalie; "and did you take the money?"

"I did. I had the notion to drink to the last drop this cup of brotherly kindness held out to me." Poor big foolish Jim! He turned red clear up to the roots of his hair and squirmed round awful in his seat.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Natalie come to the rescue by saying, "Jennie, you must give me the recipie for these delicious griddle cakes." And then she syruptitiously helped Adrien to another.

Jim said as this wan't no ordinerry occassion there had ought to be an after dinnar speach. "Furthermore than this," he says, "my freind Mr. E. J. Spinney is the one to do it."

So jest to oblige he riz up and spoke off a beautiful speach though we could see he was awfull embarrassed and mortifide. He says, "At sech moments as this I understand the self-possession of Dannle in the lion's Den. He knew whatever happened he woudent have to make the after dinnar speach."

After Jim had gone back to the shop Jason told Mr. Spinney he wished to see him a few moments in private as he had a matter to talk over with him. I was glad he was going to have his life insured. We'd found out by this time that he was a

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

rich man (Adrien had told his father that 2 of the ottoes was being repaired up and also showed our boys a toy pistol the coachman had give him) but as Mr. Spinney often remarks, life insurance money is the only kind of riches that don't take wings; and what would that pretty childish little Natalie do if he was took away and she was left unprovided for to staggar under the pitfalls of life?

Then again I was glad he was giving him this business because it has always greaved me that Mr. Spinney hadn't taken to him same as the rest of us did and this would kind of pleassant him up. And sure enough! when they come out of the parlor after their talk Mr. Spinney did look awful pleassant, though quite quiet and subdewed but cherked up when they was going away and kep things from being sad and sollem. Jason didn't make no more speeches, for which we was thankful, but jest shook hands all round. Natalie kissed everybody

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

and when she come to me she looked awful roguish and was jest agoing to say something when she saw Jason looking at her and stopped. But she took my face between 2 of her hands and kissed me half a dozen times at the last moment she looked back with that same roagish look same as Bub and Gussy looks when they are up to some of their tantrums. She aint nothing but a child and wont ever be anything else and Jason has got his hands full with her; a very fassinating handful, Mr. Spinney called her when I made the remark out loud.

At the supper table it was jest as if a funerel had took place. Mandy's eyes was all redded up showing she'd ben crying. Jim sunk his chin on his chest and forgot to eat. Hardly any one spoke, our hearts was so heavy.

At last Gussy says (his lips aquivering)
"Father, let's set the trap again to-night."

Your true freind, Jennie Allen.

XXIII

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I recollect telling you about Mame reading out loud to us evenings. Sometimes she reads the sermons of a famous minister in the New York Breaze, and we all like them. They seem to take right aholt of you and make religion reel and helping as you go along. He is awful high church and we are Baptists but that don't make no odds—there's enough common ground for both to stand on and them sermons goes right to the spot. Well, we've listened to them read and they've done us all good; but as for any of us ever seeing the minister that wrote them, we would jest as soon think of seeing King Solomon or Tenniston.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Well, yesterday he was here in this setting-room, ajoking, and alaughing and atalking with us!

And it wasn't on general principals, same as ministers goes round sometimes to kind of religify people up, but it was because it was us and nobody else.

So many remarkable occurrences has took place here lately that now I shouldn't be so awful surprised if the angel Gabrial flew right into our setting-room and handed one of us his trumpet asaying, "Here, you give this thing a blow! I'm out of breath from flying so swift and aint got the wind for it!"

That would be wonderful enough, but considering weve all had our thoughts and dreams about Gabrial in one way and another, and ackchelly look forrad to seeing him some time, his sudden appearance wouldn't seem half so wonderful as this great devign eating 3 of Mandy's hot cookys on this very spot!

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I wouldn't ever have darsted to offer him sech ordinney vittles, but he smelt them and said he would like one if it was convenient. I told him I would give him a reciept for them to take home seeing he appeared to relish them but he laughed and says, "If I gave you a reciept for them it would be more business-like."

But I'm getting clear ahead of my story. In the morning I'd gone down stairs to feed Bub's rabbits (dear little feller he's got so much on his mind he forgets them quite frequent) and when I come up Mandy was jest acoming out of the setting-room, and she made signs and motions that somebody wanted to see me in there. I went in and there sat a great big, prosperous-looking gentleman with a smooth face weighing about 180 pounds. He had a beautiful shiny beaver hat and a cane in his hand and his close was sech nice broadcloth and he looked so slick and clean generally he made the furniture look faded and old.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"How do you do, Jennie?" he says, as smiling, and arising to meet me.

Jennie! think of that!

"I'm pretty well, thank you,—but I aint never seen you before."

"Look at me again," he says, "and see if you can't guess."

I looked at him. It was a pleessant face to look at—good and kind and a twinkle in his eye—but I had to say again it was the first time I ever saw it.

"Mandy didn't know me either, but I'd feel bad enough if Jim didn't." He looked round the room and his eye rested on the mantle shelf. "I see Capten Silliker's ivory ship didn't get broke in moving. I'm glad, for I always loved that ship."

Then I knew he was Chictooset but even then I couldn't make out who in particular he was; but I could see he was bound not to tell me.

"Jennie," he says, and the twinkle in his eye kep agrowing brighter, "Jennie, have

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

you ever ben able to learn how to cut off
siphers in short division?"

By this time the way his eyes kind of
went up at the corners and him having a
cowlick begun to look familiar, and I
says,

"Are you any relation to Willie Jame-
son?"

"I am Willie Jameson!" and then he
bursted into a hearty laugh because he saw
I didn't believe a word of it.

"How can you be Willie Jameson?" I
says thinking of the poor little shadder of a
child that had faded out of life years ago
(so we thought) and looked into the large,
strong feachers of this man.

"It's a good deal easier than it used to
be," he says; "It was a pretty hard thing
being Willie Jameson 20 years ago. Come,
Jennie, let's set down and have a talk about
the old days in Chictooseet."

But I couldnt hardly believe him yet, in
spite of his words, and the cowlick, and his

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

blue eyes going up at the corners. It wasn't so much him being large and stout (lots of people puts on flesh) and it want the good close; it was the strenth and power I could see in the man. He seemed like one that could accomplice anything he set out, and could make other folks do what he wanted them to. All this was so fur away from Jim's little playmate that always acted like he didn't have no right to be here, no wonder I was slow to believe.

"You must excuse me sir," I says, "I will get round to believing it byme-by but as fur as I've got now is to thinking that Willie (he was so small and weak) is nothing but a little kernal somewheres round inside of you."

He give another hearty laugh. "Well, Jennie," he says, "there's no mistaking your indemnity even if your face had changed much, which it hasn't. Your idea of the old-time Willie being a kernal of what I am now is sertenly true in idea."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

Then he told how he happened to find out where we was living and all about us. He was to a dinner in Boston and Lyddy Rogers was there. "Lyddy's improved a lot exterially," he says, "but she's still got that sharp tongue. I'm sorry because I'm afraid she makes enemies by it. She made 2 or 3 personal remarks at the table that amused us all so much we had to laugh before we had time to pity the victems, and they was right there. Well, the people got to talking about curious eppitarfs they'd seen and heard of, and Miss Rogers (neither of us then had any idea we'd even ever seen each other before, let alone her chasing me out of her yard with a stick when I went in to get Jake Billings's ball for him) she recited off that one about Capten Silliker's wife, and said she knew it for a fack because she'd seen it regular for over 25 years.

"Did you live in Chictooset?" I asked her.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Yes," she says; "what do you know about Chictooset?"

"Then I told her about me living there for a while when I was a child, but she didn't have no recollection of me. But later we had a pleasant chat over Chictooset people, and principally we talked of your mother. I told Miss Rogers, and I tell you now, Jennie, that your mother has always been to me the ideel of what a woman had ought be. Not a quality was lacking which she had ought to possess, even to that sweet unreasonableness that is a fond mother's right. All the mothering I ever had was what she gave me.

"Once I told a lie to the school-teacher. I'd knocked a chiny vase off of her desk by accident and it broke, but when she questioned me about it I was too frightened to tell the truth. I know I could not have been naturally untruthful because that sin was a terrible weight on my soul. I felt an impulse to tell some one of it, and when

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

that impulse grew to strong to be resisted
I went straight to your mother.

"How well I remember that morning!
She was alone in the plessant kitchen,
where bright geraniums was blossoming
in tin cans in the windows and there was a
delightful oder of fresh baked bread in the
air. It was cold and raw outside but here
was plessant warmth and brightness. I
can see now the brisk little figure of your
mother as she flitted busly about the room.
When I'd told her my miserable story
about the falsehood (and I thought she'd
never let Jim play with me again) she jest
patted me on the head and says,—(the in-
consequence is my happiest memory) she
says, "Willie, don't you want a slice of my
nice hot bread with molasses on it?" and
she spread it and handed it to me. "But
aint I got to tell the teacher what I done?"
I asked her.

"Law no, dear; I always let s!leeping
dogs lie."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"I didn't know what she meant by calling me a sleeping dog, but I felt I deserved the worst that could be said and this didn't sound very bad. Then she added as I happily devoured my lunch, "I will fix it all right with the teacher for you. You aint got anything to worry about."

"O what a wise woman she was! Her way would be denounced as a wrong one by many, but I never told another falsehood, —let that tell the story.

"Her own boy never lied, but he had a strong hand and a mother like that to stand behind his daring truth, and I know she realized the differance. I am an Episcopalian minnister; I spend many hours every week in the confessionel and in dealing with my penitents I think of my own first confession in that dear New England kichen and I am inspired by the example of that little Baptist mother down in Chictooset."

Then he lowered his voice down as if he

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

was aspeaking of something holy and says, "Some day I am going to make a pilgrimage to her grave. I have in mind the very vine—one with small white blossoms—that I will plant upon it. If I have done something to aid my fellows in life I have been helped to do it by the memory of the one who lies there."

We set silent a little while after that and soon afterwards he riz up to go.

But he said he was coming again in the evening when Jim would be to home. He said he wanted to see Jim's wife, too, although him and her hadn't ever seen each other. Mame's folks lived on the other side of the Crick when he was in Chictooset and she was too little to go to school.

We couldn't hardly wait to tell Jim about it. It wan't till Willie was gone that we found out by putting this and that together that he was the great Doctor Jameson that writes them sermons! There wan't no doubt about it because he'd told me the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

name of his church and Mame said that was Doctor Jameson's, she knew, and she hunted it up in the paper where it told about it and showed it to me.

And to think the preacher of them sermons had known and been helped by Mother! I'd ought to be prouder than ever of Mother now, only I can't be. But my heart goes out in grattitude that some folks that is poor and unhappy is helped by her even now.

Mandy was the first to see Jim when he got home, and she sings out, "Jim! Doctor Jameson that writes the sermons that we like in the New York Breaze has been here and he has took away the reciept for my cookys!"

"Mandy," says Jim, awful worried, "you'd better lay down a spell and keep kind of quiet. I'll fetch in a handkerchief wrung out of cold water, to tie round your head and you jest compose yourself the best you can. I guess probbly we hadn't ought

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

to have read so many of them sermons to you. It has had a bad effeck."

As he went out to the kitchen Mame met him and cries, "Oh, Jim! that little Willie Jameson you used to play with in Chictoo-set has been here and he's coming again this evening to see you! He's jest great!"

"I thought he was dead. Look here! I aint got to put a wet handkerchief round your head, too, have I?"

Well between us all we explained it to Jim, and it put him into a mixed-up state of mind, on account of him being about equally divided between joy about seeing Willie again and being scared to face the great preacher.

"I can't make 'em seem like one person," he says; "it's like when you are looking cross-eyed and one objeck looks like two. When your eyes is straightened out, though, the thing settles down to one, and I'm hoping that will be the way with Willie and Doctor Jameson."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

And when they (I mean he) come again in the evening it wan't near so hard as he'd calkilated. Him and Jim had a beautiful talk over their play-days together. Willie spoke of Mother again and said she always looked like the little lady she was.

"I remember," he says, "that her bunnet was aways crape."

"And her slippers was always felt," says Jim reminiciously.

"Then slippers, Jim," says Willie, "was the sculptor's spatulam that she licked you into shape with. And a noble work she done! Lyddy Rogers has told me of your fine manhood, and she says that if there was many American citizens like you the countrry would be something to boast of."

Jim can't stand anything like that, so he breaks in and says, "Recolleck, Willie, the time we was going to make molasses candy and you had to work and couldn't come? And we saved some of the candy for you?"

"Course I recollect that. Do you spose

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

I've tasted anything so good since as them half-dozen pieces of black stickiness that I had to gouge with a knife out of the thick white saucer? Talk of ambrosia! Oh, the Paradise that kitchen was to me! The big pine table (scoured so white with sand) where we used to do our sums in the evenings, and the shelf above it that held the tall pile of back numbers of *The Boy's Companion* for us to feast upon when we'd covered our slates with figures! Do you recollect the continuous story about the spelling match we read together?"

Before he went away he told us all about his life after he left Chictooseet. His uncle had died soon after and he'd gone to work for a farmer in Ohio. It was a fine farm and the man and his wife was kind and, seeing he wan't rugged, didn't put any heavy work on him, and in a few years he grew strong and hearty. He had gone to school pretty regular, and he'd made up his mind to work his way through college. "I

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

done so," he says, "and little by little I have reached the place where I am now. All along the way there have been helping hands held out to me. I hope I shall live long enough to give back to the world much of the good I have received from it. Every day I am more impressed with how fine a thing humanity is, and perhaps it is cheafly in my profession that deals with people's souls that we can see to what sublime heighths it can reach!"

"And don't you see lots of the other kind of people, too?" Mame asked him.

"Yes—God pity them! God pity them!"

Later he told us that he was going to preach in Saint Anselm's the next Sunday and he wanted us all to come. So we have got that to look forward to and we are almost counting the minutes till then. He is going to have a pue saved for just us. Wont it be beautiful! Oh, Jim is so proud of Willie he don't know how to express it. He has got out the old sermons and Mame

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

is reading them to us all over again. Don't
we have beautiful things happen to us all
the time!

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XXIV

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I got your bundle of work all right and I will get it all done in time so you can send them away for Christmas. There's an awfull lot of common sence in that bundle and very little foolishness. I think about 5 per cent of foolishness is about right for Christmas gifs. You leave that out and it seems too much like bisness. But Christmas is carried to sech an excess by some foks that feel they must swap pressants with everybody they know, no matter if it don't leave enough to pay their bills that it is a curce instead of a blessing, leaving unlimbered evils afollering in its train. This form of it is more deadly in its results than the fourth of july. The fourth commonly finishes up its victims to once eather

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

one way or another but the aggregated form of Christmassing brings on a warpation of your sence of honesty along with fizical weariness leading sometimes to the grave after years of a cute suffering and docter's bills. They don't alwers know what fetched it on, and I've heard more than one lay it to the jenuerry thaw that they wan't feeling quite so spruce as they was along the first of the winter.

At sech moments my eyes is more than likely to wander to some foolish hat-pin or weak-minded and unbecoming collarette that she didnt have the privilidge of picking out herself and the remark forms itself inside me, "It's a case of a cute Christmas-sitis."

I've got so I know the Christmas shopper's face when I see it and it's wersed than the bysickle face or the motor face. It's the werst face there is. But wait till the beauty specielists get after it. Then the cause of it will have to go. The fashel mas.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

soozes have done what the preachers could not do. They teach that a serean countenance keeps old age and wrinkles at bay and the women folks clere their brows and assoom a look of peace and good will toards all mankind. And I don't beleive you can wear that look without some little speck of a corrisponding feeling underneath. A nabor was in here one day with her 2 obstreperous little ones and we took notice that while she was giving them hail Columby and calling them a varioty of onplessant things, her face was all the time like a plassid summer sea. When Mame spoke of it she said, "Yes, I sacrefize everything for these youngones, but I vow if I'll wrinkle up my face for 'em. Why!" she says; "I know of sociarty women that woudent scowl for 100\$, though their hearts was a tangle of scowls. And why not?" she says; "woudent it be a poor mizable kind of a housekeeper that would tolurate a mess of wrinkles in her wall paper

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

or carpet? And aint your face as much account as them?"

This sounded sencible and we had to give in that next best to having no worries over petty things and no hateful feelings was keeping 'em below the surface when you did have 'em.

But speaking of Christmas, aint it a blessed, joyful time for the children! It don't bring worry or trouble to them but only pure and unmitigated happiness. It don't requier but 10 cents outlay with most little ones for their stockings to bring the kingdom of Heaven right down to them. And wouldn't it be fine even now if we got a watch that showed time to stand still for us as it did then on the 5 cent variety? And how many an anxious mother wishfully recalls her first baby of wood or chiny that wouldest ever wander away from her? And as for the small no-account perse with its one bright cent, all the wealth of the rocky fellers can't perchess now what we

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

planned to get with that. Up to the time the childern learn the cash vallew of things Christmas is all it had ought to be; after that comes the commershel element and lurks in the toe of every stocking. I know a cupple of years from now Gussy wont be so tickeled with the 2-cent whistle he has got for his mother. By that time he has got to torcher his poor little brain to find out if it is the most sootable pressant and the very biggest he can get for the money and all of us big folks will have to disgust it with him. Now he can't wait for the time to come to Put that foolish trifle in her stocking and see her joy in the morning when she finds it there. Mame has got verry coarse veins and has to wear rubber hose. So Bub and Gussy has both begged for one to hang up because Santy can stretch them. I aint got but very little patience with folks that gab about it being wrong to learn the children the Santy Claus myth because they say when their

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

powers and intellex is awoke and they find themselves decieved it makes them shakey about religious truths. I know it aint so because long after Sis had found out there want no Santy from a boy, there come that dretful coal strike that winter when everybody was suffering from cold, and it come into that wise little head of hers about one place where there aint ever any scarcity of heat, and she says to her Father, "Father, why don't they dig holes down in the ground to the bad place and put registers ovar them and let up a lot of heat for poor people?"

Them things is jest as reel to her as the air she breathes and she never douts anythings she learns in Sunday School. I wisht Bub had as much faith, once after I told him about Dannle in the Lion's den 6 times and he wanted to hear the story again, and I told him I was tired of telling it, he says, "Then make up another one."

All of us big folks knows there is reely a

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

kind of Santy. It aint ackchelly one person but it's all the love and kindness of relations and freinds put into this small pack-edge so children can sence it. We know there is an awful lot of good things coming to us all the time and what ords does it make whether one person feches it down the chimbley Christmas morning or everybody keeps bringing it to us through the year?

No; beleiving in Santy wont never make our little ones shakey on religion, but I know what will and that's the new spelling. There aint no sense to my mind in revoluting our spelling. I had an awful time this fall learning Bub a cupple of hard words, being obliged to resort to quite sevear methods so you could hear him holler clear down in the street, and now according to that new dictionerry the way he spelt them was right and the way I spanked them into him was wrong.

It don't only seem foolish but ackchelly

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

wicked to trifl with sech things. They will be tampering with the Muttiplication table next, and I always think now when I'm learning the childern that 7 times 8 is 56 that praps nex year at this time it will make 32 or maybe 48; and it gives me an unsettled fealing and keeps me from being as ferm with him as I had ought to be, not so very differant from quitting beleif in God.

This change in spelling comes from so many folks breaking away from all kinds of law, human and devign and ledgislatrative, and it's one of the beginnings of arnachy, as I look at it as well as thinning out religion. What kind of a sight would the Bible make printed out in the new manner? Could we have as much respeck for the aposotle Pol (so wrote) as we do with his diphthong in the place it has ockipied for centuaries? Mr. Spinney thinks so, too, and he says anybody can see that removing an l from the bad place reduces it

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

in size. And that makes me think why is it people so often make a dash in the middle of hell? I mean like this: h-ll, jest as if all the cussedness was lodged in that innocent little e. And in other words, too, they are scared to speak out plain, and sometimes it leads to mistakes, like when a friend of Jim's one cold night last winter referred to that blankety blankety bed of his when the fack he was trying to bring out was that it wasn't blankety at all. Folks had ought to say what they mean unless they mean something they hadn't ought to say.

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XXV

Christmas Afternoon

Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

We've had a splendid time to-day. We grown-up folks had agreed not to give presents to each other, but it come out that we done it jest the same. We 3 women folks made 4 of a new kind of shirt for Jim—a stilish kind, and we asked him how they fitted. "Like hell," he says.

Mame told him it wasn't only wicked to use sech expressions, but furthermore it was foolish. "What sence is there," she says, "in saying them poor inoffensive shirts fit like the place you mention?"

"It's easy enough to get into them," he says, "but it's impossible to get out of 'em again."

We neglected a good many things round

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

the house during the Christmas rush. The children had to look after themselves quite a lot.

We was awful mortifide at something Gussy said in school. It seems his face wasn't clean and his teacher took notice of it. "I know, little boy," she says, "what you had for breakfast this morning. It was an egg."

"No, that was yesterday morning," he says.

Mame had to write her a note and smooth it over. I offered to do it as she was busy but she wouldn't let me. She is awful thoughtful of me at times.

Mrs. Ezry Sawyer come in this morning with her purse out of which she poured coals of fire on my head. She told me she had sent on 400\$ to Ben and she'd jest had a telegraft despatch telling her I wont say how much money he has made with it and has put it in the bank. A check book is to



"It's easy enough to get into them," he says, "but it's impossible to get out of 'em again"

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

foller by mail. She says it has jest took her breath away.

She said if I had sent $\frac{1}{5}$ of it why $\frac{1}{5}$ of this large sum would be mine and she fetched me in 20\$ towards going to Chic-tooset in the spring. I told her it didn't seem right or consistant to take it. She'd risked her money which I wouldn't do and she'd had the job of fixing up her conscience so it done its prompting to suit her (and I wouldn't do that either) and I wasn't mean enough to reap the benefit from it. Then she said, I had done more than that worth for her anyway and she was glad to be able to pay me back.

"Not with that money," I says.

"It's good money, Jennie," she replies.

"Taint," says Mr. Spinney.

It was worth all the sacrifice to see he was on my side. Talk about men of business getting their sense of honesty blunted up! That aint him!

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

We had hated to tell her about Jason being a married man and his wife coming and accompanying him home. I didn't look at her when I told her (kind of casual) and done it when I was threading the machine needle and the others was out of the room. I pitied her for I knew she'd realize she'd made a fool of herself. It took me a long time to thread the needle, long enough for her to recover herself.

"Whats she look like?" she says at last in a blunt tone.

I want going to describe her (who could describe Natalie, that cross between a butterfly and a kitten) because I didn't want to show sech a contrast; so I jest said,

"Oh! she was a very good-looking woman and quite nice and sociable in her ways, and him and her are awful fond of one another. We've had letters from them both and she says nex time he comes for a

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

visit she and the little boy is coming, too.
So you'll see her for yourself."

Well, this was last week; and to-day she told us after she'd got through coaxing me about the money, that she now cacklates to move out to Seattle and live along of Ben. She added that she would of done so long hence if it wan't for her rhumatism, that the excess of fog out there would be bad for. I don't know as I've told you that she has got chronicle rhumatism and she's always telling us how she got it and all about it. So much so that Sis says she (Sis) could take an examination in it any time.

But now she says she don't believe it is half as bad as she thinks it is. Ben says it aint and she explained why. She said "the prevailing mountains draws the sun's rays to a fokiss and then they refragerate off into space and leave a vacuum."

Mr. Spinney remarked it was evident

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

there was a vacuum somewhere but he rather thought it was this side of Seattle.

(I wouldn't put in so much what the men folks say, only you told me you always enjoy their little jokes and remarks.)

And Mrs. Sawyer says that even chronic rhumatism hadn't ought to separate mother and son. She told us that the bond between them was extra strong because Ben come to her at a time when she was feeling far from well. She had just lost her father and two aunts and it seemed as though that little child had come to take the place of all three.

Mr. Spinney told her that he hadn't noticed anything excessive or unusual in her affection, nothing anyway that seemed to call for any apology or explanation.

This pleased her very much. She likes Mr. Spinney.

Jim says he didn't realize Ben was up against any such stunt as that—personating the old man and two aunts from his in-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

fancy. It was enough to dismay the stoutest heart.

Moreover, Mrs. Sawyer said she felt it was her duty to go and moderate Ben down. He'd got to be a reel estate agent and was arushing round here, there and everywhere, and ackchelly didn't take time to set down but even et standing up. "And," she says, "I shouldn't wonder if he'd got so nervous by this time that he couldn't stand setting down anyway."

"None of us can do that," says Mr. Spinney, and he got up this conundrum: "Why is Mrs. Ezry Sawyer like the British Empire? Because her son never sets."

She said Ben had struck up a friendship with a man considdable older than himself that boarded to the same place, and this freind often said he wisht he was back East, money or no money. "Is it your folks you're hankering for?" Ben asked him one day.

"Lord, no!" he says; "I was glad enough to get quit of 'em."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Is it the blue sky and the sunshine?" pursooed Ben. He'd said himself the first winter he was there he'd swap a cupple of house lots any time for a 2 foot patch of blue sky. But now he says, "Mother $\frac{9}{10}$ of the year the climate is so glorious you need that kind of a winter to keep you from thinking you have died and went to heaven."

"No, it aint! nor the bobolinks, nor the periwinkles (whatever them is)—it's the vittles!"

He says he's jest about dead for some eastern cooking. His wife, he told Ben that's been dead for three years, was a splendid cook. He says he's had the most beautiful dreams about her descending down to him with big wings spread out and a plait of doughnuts in her hand which she holds out to him, and the whole business is so reel that he can ackchelly smell the doughnuts after he has woke up. He says that if he ever remarries again it won't

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

be no pretty little do-nothin, but a woman
that's mistress of the frying-pan and the
stew-kettle.

"I'm glad," she says, "that Ben has got
sech a freind. He's an awful good-living
man, he tells me, though plain and unpre-
tentious in the face. He's named Mr.
Cooty."

"Well I got to be going," she says, "as
I've got considable to do. The prices is
so absorbent in Seattle that I'm agoing to
do my trading here before I go. Mame,
have you got your receipt-book handy? I
want to copy off a number of them before
I leave. What kind do you have the best
luck with—sour milk or creamy tarter
doughnuts?"

Now dear freind, I want to thank you
for your lovely gif, but how can I do it?
I have kep it for the last, hoping I would
be able to but I aint. It looks jest like him,
more so than the tin-type it was copied
from because it is painted so pretty and

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

deliket. I opened it in the midst of all the fun and frolic this morning, and you ought to have heard the sudden hush that followed when I passed it round for them to see. But nobody cried because we all know how happy he is. Only Mame dropped a tear or 2 on the little blue velvet case as she handed it back.

Later.

What would you say if I was to tell you that our setting-room was now heaped and strewed round with all kinds of beautiful and costly gifts fit for the Rothschilden-julery, silver ware, leather-covered books, pictures and new and pretty garments?

Well, I'd say it myself (whatever it is) even being here and seeing the things, as I do, if I didn't also see strewed round the saw-dust, excelsior, and broke-up boxes things that never go with what your fancy congers up. This debree stamps it as facks. But Sis says it seems like her Christmas

N

all the
ou had
sh that
r them
we all
drop-
et case

ll you
d and
utiful
lren—
books,
ts?
it is)
gs, as
nd the
boxes,
fancy
facks.
stmas

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

story book come to life and magnified a hundred times.

Hers is a big doll with a reel trunk (only small) full of clothe. At first she hardly darsted to touch it, it was so dainty and lovely but it don't seem's if she's took her eyes off of it once.

Sis aint ever had but one big doll and she's had that since she was 2 years and thinks the world of it because it is most as old as she is. The little boys has always ben awful rough with her, but they would have her to play with because they saw how much Sis wanted her herself (there's them 2 railroad men afighting out in Seattle jest like 'em) and so every Christmas she has had to have either a new body or a new head. This time I made a new body. Once when the doll was up in Mrs. Hennery's because she was going to have a new head put on a little girl come in with her big doll to play with Sis. Sis felt lost not having any to play with, too, so she

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

had to take the baby and use him for a doll. He done very well for a substitute as he wan't very well at the time and was kind of dumpish, so the little playmate never knew the differance for quite awhile.

When we told Jim about it, he stroked her head awful tender and says, "Aint that her grandmother Allen right out?"

He told us he wanted to buy a nice doll for her, new clear through her system; but Mame says, "Jim, dear, we mustn't, you don't know I long to do it to, but we can't afford it."

And they both of them suffered for Sis when Sis didn't suffer at all. When Mrs. Hennery brought in the old doll no mother could be in a bigger exstasy over a prodigle son than she was over that comickle looking objeck. Don't ever waste any sympathy over a little girl with an old doll. Sis will worship the new doll but it's the old one she'll love.

When Jim saw he couldn't give Sis the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

playsure he wanted to, he begun, as usual, to look on the bright side, and said anyway Sis hadn't to have any onpleasant discovery about her doll being stuffed with saw dust. She'd knowed what her insides was ever since Bub had ben old enough to grab things.

Mame's pressent is silver things for the table and a broach with jewels in it. Mandy got a beautiful broach, too, and a beaded shattylaine bag with a perce of money in it, (Mr. Spinney says she can now spend the rest of her natural life at the photographer's) and the beautiful french clock with the chimes is Mr. Spinney's and the gold watch is Jim's. The libery of books is for all of us bound in leather and as much as 200 of them and on the card it said, For the Home Reading Club. There's a fine case to hold them. Even Mrs. Sawyer wan't forgot and there a gold pencil in a white kid case for her. For me there was a beautiful gold ri g

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

with a turquoise and 2 little dimonds (it's the hardest of all to believe I have got a ring with dimonds in it) and on that card it said (she's the greatest, she is) For the kind little hand that wrote the Letter. Then she'd scribbled underneath that it was only a pledge of my reel gif that was coming later. Jest think of that!

Of the big heap of books for the children I can't go into particklers, but the children is jest about crazy over them. And at this moment Mame is kneeling in front of a great box of beautiful children's close and jest about going into a fit over every one, especially the dresses and coat for the baby. He's asleep and she can't hardly wait for him to wake up so she can try them on. Well, I guess none of us know jest what we're doing, we're all in sech a state of excitement. I don't see how we can have any dinner to-day—there's no one carm enough to peel the vegetables.

There! I do believe I have forgot to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

tell you who sent the things. You see what a state I'm in. It was Jason and Natalie, and may we be as happy as they are now. (I mean the other way round.) Jim don't know about it yet because he had some work to finish at the shop and he aint got back yet. There's a little package for him that's sealed up. Mr. Spinney opened the boxes for us. Mame asked him to "because it was so hard for the children to wait." (The children!)

Jim has got home and when he saw the state of the setting-room he says, "Well, well! Who's got burnt out now?"

Then the whole fambly pitched in and all talked, or screamed, to once telling him about it. And he was jest like a boy with that gold watch. My! if he want tickled over it!

But when he opened the little sealed package his face sobered and when Mame looked over his shoulder at the small book

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

he held in his hand she grew white and motioned for me to come and see, but not to tell the children. It was a bank book showing a large sum of money dispossited to his credit in the bank. It was so large it scared me but I can't tell you how much because we've all promised we wont tell anybody; but I will say there is 4 figures to it. When I saw the 3 ciphers I thought there must be a mistake and the man that wrote it down got kind of nervous and kep on making them when he'd ought to stop; but there it was wrote out in words besides, so it was all right.

Jim with that sober look still on his face, got down on his knees and uttered a prayer of thanks. We all knelt with him and said amen at the close. How could our Christmas be any happier than it is, including all the bright hope for the future?

Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

XXVI

New Year's Day, January I th, 1907.
Miss Musgrove, dear freind,

I don't know as I can compose myself to write but I want to tell you the verry first one, though you don't seem jest the same now any more than any thing else seems the same. Everything appears like when you look through one of them glass prizzums where everything is reely the same but kind of glorified up.

When I was a little girl I had one of them prizzums that come off of Grammy's parlor lamp, and I used to lend it to my little playmates when they was sick in the house for amusement. Other times it was kep in the little red box with my other traysures. It all come back to me last night and that prizzum has ben with me in sperit ever since. But I must tell you all about

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

the wonderful thing that has happened.

Last night I was alone in the setting-room when Mr. Spinney come in. Jim and Mame had gone to the theatre, the children was in bed, and Mandy was washing up the supper dishes. She aint so particular washing dishes as she might be, I am foarced to say. They are more likely than not to be adhecive, and Jim says that when you get aholt of a genuyne Mandy-washed dish it aint any easy matter to leave go of it again. At sech moments the attraction of gravity seems to lose its power. One day when there was a pudding in the oven baking, Mame told Mandy to stick a knife into it, and if the knife come out clean it was done.

"And if it does come out clean," says Jim, "stick all the knives in."

I asked Mr. Spinney how his mother was and he said she had ben attacked by another Latin disease beside which all the

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

former ones paled as stars before the sun; but it wan't appendiciters,—that much he knew—and he guessed his mother after all would outlive her appendicks for as many vitel complaints as she had passed through they hadn't ben heard from yet. He told me this last sickness had took all his money and he was foarced to pawn quite a number of things besides. He asked me if I didn't recollect the time we asked him where he was the night before and he had told us he'd ben to three balls. Course I did and how society we thought he was. Little did we know. "And during that distressful period," he says, "my meals was more in the nature of symbols than the reel thing."

"Oh!" I says, "why didn't you tell us? I had most 75\$."

"That's jest why," he says; "I knew you had it."

"And you didn't even ever come in to

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

supper same as you did when you was prosperous."

"No; for you to give me supper when I could afford it myself was hospertality; but when I couldn't afford to get it myself, it was charity. But that is all over now. Mother's internal economy (though I can hardly foarce myself to call it that when it has cost so like blazes) is now in working order and I have had a big raise."

"So has Jim," I says, "at the beginning of the year. One reason for it is he aint touched a drop for over a year. We don't have that to worry about now.

"Then there's other things that makes the New Year sech a happy one. We feel quite encouraged about Mandy. She is beginning to have gleams. She had one last night when there was callers in, and they took notice of it, too. Then her and Mame gets along more peaceable than they did, and the boys aint any wheres near as tempestuous as they was."

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

"Jen," he says like a meteor out of a clear sky, "what do you say to adding me to your menadgery?"

Of course I thought he meant taking him to board, and I says "That will be as Jim and Mame say," only adding that our meals was plain and unpretentious as a rule.

Then he told me he wanted me to be his wife.

It took me so by surprise that I couldn't speak for a long time. I had thought no woman in the world was good enough or bright enough to be his wife and here he was asking me.

Seeing I couldn't speak, he went on and said I was the only woman in the world for him; and that when he went away the picture of the happy little figger in the sewing-chair (that was me) always went with him. Then he told me he had never before ben in a position to marry, but now all

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

was bright and gay and he wanted me to share his good fortune.

"What a home we'll have, Jennie," he says; "why! you are home itself. Jest you setting out on the sidewalk would look like home."

Then he got off a lot of tender remarks which I should be ashamed to write down, though they was quite pleassant to hear. But what surprised me the most of all was when he said one thing he loved me for was because I didn't have no nerves.

"You are the only woman in the world, he says, "that is entirely free from them obnoxious members; and if that aint enough distinction for my wife, I'd like to know what is."

They talk a lot about love being the same old story. This is jest as different as it can be from anything before or since.

Mame has read to us evenings about the great loves of history; and I should like to know if Danty made love to Bea-

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN

triss or Pete Rark made love to Laury as Mr. Spinney made it to me. He is too bright and origineral to copy after any one of them. What he said about me not having any nerves and him loving me for it was uttered for the first time in history when he uttered it.

I can't realize it is all true but I wish every woman was $\frac{1}{2}$ as happy as I am tonight. Your true freind,

Jennie Allen.

It is going to be in the old homestead in Chictooiset and the whole fambly . d his mother will be there. Furthermore than that he says he has good reason for knowing that Jason and Natalie and little Adrien will be there, too. We are going to ask Willie Jameson to be the minister.

We are going to live close to my folks so I can help them when they need me, and his mother is going to live with us. My cup runneth over.